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ABSTRACT

This textbook/sourcebook and accompanying trainer's guide, which were issued as part of a project to republish important staff development project reports/materials, are updated and repackaged versions of a staff development curriculum in adult literacy and learning. The first part of the sourcebook contains 20 "keys" or quick overviews of the following topics: the teachable moment, empowerment, motivation, functional literacy, good reader habits, prior knowledge, practice versus perfection, stages of reading, methodology, comprehension, perceptual modes, whole language, self-monitoring, self-esteem, learning disabilities, adult approaches, pleasure reading, teacher and tutor, independence, and family literacy. Presented in the second part of the sourcebook are five chapters on the following topics: literacy training models, assessment in adult literacy, the reading process, adult reading theory, and a psychological/sociological profile of the adult reader. Concluding the sourcebook are a summary, 296-item bibliography, and glossary. The trainer's guide contains the following: guidelines to using the curriculum and keys, considerations for program administrators and trainers, determining which keys to use, an inservice program announcement, and general/session evaluation forms. Also included is a final report entitled, "Second Wind: Republishing Important Staff Development Projects To Reach More Adult Educators," summarizing the project to republish important adult education materials. (MN)

TEXTBOOK AND SOURCEBOOK

ED 376 352

HOW ADULTS READ

A Staff Development Curriculum

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Judith A. Rance-Roney
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Judith A. Rance-Roney
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

KEY #1: The Teachable Moment 7
KEY #2: Empowerment 9
KEY #3: Motivation 11
KEY #4: Functional Literacy 13
KEY #5: Good-Reader Habits 16
KEY #6: Prior Knowledge 18
KEY #7: Practice, Not Perfection 20
KEY #8: Stages of Reading 22
KEY #9: Methodology 24
KEY #10: Comprehension 27
KEY #11: Perceptual Modes 29
KEY #12: Whole Language 32
KEY #13: Self-Monitoring 36
KEY #14: Self-Esteem 39
KEY #15: Learning Disabilities 41
KEY #16: Adult Approaches 44
KEY #17: Pleasure Reading 47
KEY #18: Teacher and Tutor 50
KEY #19: Independence 52
KEY #20: Family Literacy 55

SOURCEBOOK 58

Chapter 1
Literacy Training Models 59
A. Training and motivation of tutors and teachers 59
B. An overview of literacy models 61
C. Special approaches to literacy 67
D. Materials used in literacy models 70
E. Conclusions 71

Chapter 2
Assessment in Adult Literacy 73
A. What is being measured? 73
B. Standardized tests 74
C. Alternative assessments 76

Chapter 3
An Introduction to the Reading Process 81
A. Introduction 81
B. What is reading? 81
C. Important concepts in reading 83

Chapter 4
Adult Reading Theory 93
A. Adults' perceptions of the reading process 93
B. Types of adult readers 94
C. Developmental stages of adult reading 97
D. Adult functional literacy 98
E. Methods especially for adults 100

Chapter 5
The Psychological and Sociological Profile of the Adult Reader 105
A. Introduction 105
B. Self-directed learning 105
C. Adult empowerment and locus of control 106
D. Self-esteem and adult literacy 108
E. Learning difficulties in adults 111
F. Cognitive style and adult reading 114
G. Life changes/life crises 115
H. Literacy acquisition and society 116
I. Family literacy 117

Summary of the Sourcebook 120

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 121

GLOSSARY 136

INTRODUCTION

to How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum

CURRICULUM DESIGN

How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum provides a background, both theoretical and practical, for the teacher or tutor who is serious about providing sound, research-based literacy instruction to adult students. As the *Trainer's Guide* outlines, this course may be utilized in its entirety, as a comprehensive look at adult reading, or in segments, emphasizing the topics of greatest interest and need. The ideal setting is a relatively small group of literacy instructors led by a designated trainer, in which participants may openly share ideas. However, *How Adults Read* has a great deal to offer to the individual studying independently as well.

The following principles set the tone for the *How Adults Read* curriculum:

1. Teachers and tutors of adults need *adult* reading models to follow; a knowledge of how children read is not enough. There are pervasive and important differences in the way an adult and child acquire reading skills.

2. Each adult is a unique combination of skills and deficits. An inservice program which emphasizes instructional flexibility and which provides a toolchest of different strategies is the most appropriate.

3. Theoretical information about reading will encourage the teacher/tutor to problem-solve in an instructional situation.

4. Any curriculum which explores adult reading theories must be viewed as provisional. The body of research on adult reading is relatively small, and little of it has been replicated; therefore, the information presented in this curriculum represents current research's prevailing hypotheses.

5. In the final analysis, the purpose of *How Adults Read* is to challenge the tutor/teacher to delve more deeply into the uniqueness of each adult as they work with them and to respond more thoughtfully when designing the best program of instruction.

ABOUT THE KEYS

The curriculum includes 20 "Keys," or quick overviews, of topics in adult reading. The first eight Keys cover life crises/teachable moments, empowerment, motivation, functional literacy, psycholinguistics ("good-reader habits"), experiential background, error correction, and stages of reading. In light of this background, the next six Keys discuss teaching methodology: phonics vs. language experience curricula, comprehension, perceptual modes, whole language, metacognition ("self-monitoring"), and self-esteem. These are followed by Keys on learning disabilities and methods for teaching adults. The last four Keys are on reading for enjoyment, teacher/tutor relationships, reader independence, and family literacy. You will observe some overlap and redundancy among the Keys. This is necessary so that Keys may be used in isolation.

Each Key is arranged in the same basic format:

- A brief introduction to the Key topic.
- An *Explanation* of the Key's main principles, numbered by each research-supported

point.

- *Implications for Teaching*, offering a number of practical applications of the research.
- *To Consider*, presenting related issues for your reactions.
- *For More Information*, pointing to Sourcebook and other references if you are interested in further pursuing the topic.
- *Student Voice*, offering a real-life scenario related to the Key topic from an adult literacy student's perspective.
- *Teacher Voice*, a real-life scenario from a teacher/tutor's perspective.
- *Your Voice*, an opportunity for discussion of instructional applications of the research findings related to the topic.

ABOUT THE SOURCEBOOK

Following the Keys is the Sourcebook, a survey of articles written in various areas of ABE, ESL, GED, and literacy, compiled to supply the research base for the staff development inservice. A variety of sources, including document articles, books, and journals were explored, both in the field of adult reading and in the broader field of juvenile reading when the information was applicable to our adult students. In this volume are supplied summaries of research referred to in the Keys.

A bibliography of cited references follows the Sourcebook.

Finally, a Glossary at the back of the book defines important terminology of the field of adult reading.■

KEY #1

THE TEACHABLE MOMENT

Adults often seek literacy education in a time of life change.

STUDENT VOICE

One caller to a literacy program told us: "I've been thinking about this all day since I heard your ad on the radio about GED classes. My wife just found out she's pregnant. I never did learn to read real well, and I guess this is the time I gotta start."

Entering class, another student, Marta, says, "I broke up with my boyfriend. I'm tired of men trying to dominate me, of not wanting me to get ahead. I'm tired of wanting to better myself and getting no support. I don't want to be kept at a dumber level. I'm on my own now, and I'm going to get my GED before I get into another relationship with a man."

MANY ADULTS ENTER OUR LITERACY programs primarily because they have not succeeded in the traditional school system, a system which may not value what is valued by the student. As a result, adult students often carry along with them the perception of failure.

Further, adults often seek literacy education at a time of life change, or life crisis. Fortunately, this crisis creates what some writers call a "teachable moment," in which the fear of learning is overridden by the need to adapt to a new situation in life, such as divorce, job loss, or the birth of a child.

It is our job as adult educators to capture and sustain that teachable moment, to encourage the motivation to face previous failures and to persevere in striving for literacy.

EXPLANATION

1. Research on the effectiveness of literacy programs revolves around two central issues: the effectiveness of the instruction in affecting reading gain and the ability to retain adults in an instructional program long enough for teaching effects to improve reading gain.

Research suggests that adults who seek literacy education often have low self-esteem, negative attitudes toward education, a fear of failure, and a desire to avoid social disapproval for their participation (Hayes, 1988). The research also suggests that situational barriers to participation in adult basic education are relatively unimportant if the learner has high self-esteem and holds positive attitudes toward education (Hayes, 1988).

2. If literacy is viewed as an interactive process in which the adult's reading skills are closely associated with the affective perceptions (emotional associations) of reading, then the learner's emotional state and feelings about learning will either positively or negatively affect any instruction.

Researchers also believe that the positive effect of motivation and the adult's desire to lessen the anxiety and stress of illiteracy are potent forces in the learning-to-read process (Boraks and Schumacher, 1981).

3. Some changes which trigger learning may not be crises but transitions in life cycles (job, marriage, children). Havinghurst (1972) calls these periods "teachable moments" because of the high motivation that accompanies them. The right time to teach job-application skills, for example, might be just before a student takes the GED exam. Fears of "what's next" may produce the anxiety *and* the receptivity to the information at hand.

Not all motivation to engage in literacy education is a result of a life crisis; it can be a slow realization of need which compels some students to break the fear barrier. Meyer et al. (1991) describe the reading goals of Norman, a 44-year-old new reader: "Despite his unpleasant memories of formal education, Norman never lost his desire to learn to read ... his desire centered on economic, family and religious needs" (p.38). His $8.00-per-hour job, his desire to

read to his physically disabled daughter, and his desire to read the Bible by himself are credited with his initial motivation.

4. *Adults don't always seek basic education only to learn new skills; they may be also seeking to increase their self-esteem at a time in their lives when they are facing critical life changes.*

Brookfield (1986) reminds us that adults often seek further education because of external factors (unemployment, divorce, bereavement) but engage in learning of their own volition, and that the choice to engage in learning is the learner's alone. In fact, the most significant learning we undergo as adults results from events or crises which produce intense and uncomfortable stress and anxiety. These events lead adults to question their life status and habitual ways of moving through their daily lives. Engagement in learning provides the adult student with a sense of control over what may be uncontrollable events.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Be careful to set realistic goals for learning. Break lessons into segments to ensure success at every meeting. The most enthusiastic student may also be the most impatient.

2. Capitalize on the motivation that brought the student to class. Sustain that "teachable moment" by planning lessons which meet the student's immediate needs, such as learning to process medical forms or making day-care arrangements.

3. Once initial needs have been met, guide the student in planning reachable longer-range goals.

4. Focus on fostering positive attitudes by constantly demonstrating progress to the student, no matter how small.

TO CONSIDER

1. Discuss/think about the concept of the "teachable moment" in terms of the low-literate adult. What do adults in your program mention as the initiating events (e.g., pregnancy, drug rehabilitation) of "teachable moments"?

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement, and why? *The most important reason adults seek literacy education is to increase their self-esteem.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 5, Sec. G.
- Read *Adults As Learners* (1981) by K. Patricia Cross or *Self-Directed Learning* (1975) by Malcolm Knowles.

TEACHER VOICE

Erica, an experienced tutor and teacher, told the story of George, a 26-year-old literacy student in an urban program. He is a slow learner who also is physically handicapped by cerebral palsy. George has never lived apart from his parents, who are overly protective and controlling. At last, he has the opportunity to leave home and move in with a friend. He is scared but willing to take the risk. George tells Erica, "I want to be independent. I'm ready to go out on my own. What I want most in this class is to learn to read my mail carefully. I want the privacy of doing it myself, without someone else knowing everything. I have to be able to fill out forms for medical assistance and I need to keep my own checkbook."

Erica then sat down with George and made a list of lessons George needed in the coming weeks.

Possible curricular applications for the "teachable moment"

- **processing medical forms**
- **arranging day care**
- **reading divorce papers**
- **setting up a checkbook**
- **conducting a job search**

YOUR VOICE

Imagine that a student has just entered your program in the midst of a nasty divorce.

- What impact do you expect this will have on your literacy sessions?
- How might you help your student to deal with the situation?
- How will your curriculum reflect the specific needs of the student?

In general ...

- Can you recall a specific instance in which a life-changing event impelled one of your students to come back to school?

KEY #2

EMPOWERMENT

The active adult learner is in control of the learning situation.

STUDENT VOICE

When asked why he attended class, Nelson, a regularly attending student in a community program, replied, "My wife doesn't want me to come to this class. She wants me to come to her for everything. She finished a year and a half of college, but she hates to even tell me a word. There's no harm in teaching your husband. But I want to know how to write a check without her help. I gotta tough it out; I gotta come to class."

THE CONTROL AN ADULT TAKES OVER THE learning situation is critical to success. Yet many of the adults who enter our programs feel they have little control over the environment in general and the classroom in particular.

Students who do not feel any control over their literacy learning are likely to remain inactive learners who will be afraid of taking the risks necessary to learn to read. They are also unlikely to persevere in the extremely difficult task of learning as an adult. And—let's be honest—three or even five hours per week, is insufficient time to teach someone to read or do math when he has already spent years in traditional school and not succeeded in learning what he needs.

When the power is vested only in the teacher, the adult learns only in the classroom. But when the power moves to the student, learning can continue beyond the classroom and the student becomes empowered to teach himself and take responsibility for his own success.

EXPLANATION

1. The Coleman Report (Coleman, et al., 1966) hypothesized that the perception of control a disadvantaged student has over his environment is closely related to school achievement. The report states: "In different words, it appears that *children* from advantaged groups assume that the environment will respond if they are able enough to affect it; children from disadvantaged groups do not make this assumption, but assume that nothing they can do will affect the environment—it will give benefits or withhold them, but not as a consequence of their own action" (p.321).

2. Rotter (1966) speculated that the degree to which individuals believe they have control over their environment is a factor in the way individuals see the world and consequently learn. Rotter called this concept "locus of control," and divided individual perception of control into two categories, internal and external. A person can be classified as internal when he perceives the outcomes of behaviors to be a consequence of his own actions. An external personality, in contrast, perceives that outcomes are more likely the result of fact, luck, or some outside force.

Weiner (1985) related the concept of locus of control to achievement motivation. If an individual believes in control of his environment, he is said to gain managerial control over his existence. This striving for managerial control is closely tied to how hard an adult tries to learn and how strong his need for self-directedness in learning will be.

3. The overall effect of control is cyclical. An individual who feels in control of life in general is more likely to be task-oriented and is likely to stay in a program long enough to achieve his goals and take responsibility for learning beyond the classroom. This individual will also be an active partner with the teacher in literacy learning and will attempt different strategies in an effort to learn.

The opposite is also true: adults who feel out of control in a hostile environment often seek literacy or basic education in an effort to gain managerial control over that environment. This striving for control is a powerful motivator in initial instruction but sometimes fades as the student realizes the enormity of the task.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Allow the student to define his own goals. Let the student direct his own learning as much as possible. End each class with the question, "What would you like, or what do you need to learn next week?"

2. Listen to the student as he describes how it is easiest for him to learn. Try using the approaches he defines as most successful. (See Key #11, Perceptual Modes.)

3. Be sure to keep materials easy enough for the student to feel success. But be certain that challenging material is included in small doses so that the student does not feel demeaned by work that is too easy.

4. Help the student to take ownership of his work. Encourage him to keep a portfolio of his writing and guide him in evaluating his own work ... help him to see areas in which he has progressed well and to identify those in which he needs to grow.

5. Give the student independent assignments in which he can succeed. Eliminating home assignments might make him feel that 1) you do not consider him capable of working without assistance, 2) the work is not valuable enough to be practiced between lessons, and 3) the tutor/teacher is the "holder" of knowledge and that this knowledge can only be dispensed in class.

6. Reverse roles frequently and allow your student to teach you what he can do well. The student has skills you don't have, perhaps cooking ethnic foods or fixing a car.

7. Encourage student support groups and peer mentoring.

TO CONSIDER

1. Why is the concept of *managerial control* important in learning to read?

2. Do you agree or disagree with Coleman in his assertions about the disadvantaged population?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook Chap. 5, Sec. C.
- Read *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning* (1986) by Stephen Brookfield.

TEACHER VOICE

Much to her surprise, Alma, an over-60 literacy student from Italy, is progressing in reading and writing. According to the teacher and tutor that work with her, she rarely accepts praise for her work and always calls herself stupid.

But once a month, Alma invites her tutor and teacher over to cook lunch. They generally pick up Alma early in the morning. Alma has prepared a shopping list the night before, the letters painstakingly formed. Alma directs the teacher and tutor to the best markets and shows them the difference between the pastas; she chooses the ingredients. Alma is clearly in charge. While making the lasagna, Alma dictates the recipes to the tutor, who records them (giving Alma a copy for her file box). Then Alma assigns the teacher and tutor jobs to do in the kitchen.

For the next class, Alma brings the boxes and labels from the ingredients and these are used as a lesson.

YOUR VOICE

- Describe your concept of student empowerment to another person.
- Choose one or more of the following areas in which a teacher may include empowerment ideas:
  - homework/independent study
  - GED testing
  - free reading
  - dictation

  Discuss ways in that area by which a student may be empowered. (For example, in lesson planning, you may ask a group of students to form a committee to suggest topics for the next session.)

KEY #3

MOTIVATION

The desire to continue learning must come from within the student.

STUDENT VOICE

Jess spoke to the teacher with excitement in her voice. "This is the first time I've really been in the right class! It feels so good to be where I should be. After fourth grade I was dumped in Special Ed. I was smart enough to do the work in the regular class but I had a lot of family problems and never really got the encouragement to try." Jess quit school in eighth grade and had six kids by the time she was 25.

Her teacher, Mary, started low enough so that Jess wasn't unduly pressured. At the end of each class, she gave Jess some independent work to do at home, but it was always short and "doable," like finding an article about baseball in the newspaper or watching the news and writing down some facts about current events.

AFTER YEARS OF BEING TOLD THEY HAD TO go to school, adults finally have a choice of whether to go to class or stay home. This is not a captive audience. And quite honestly, if we as literacy educators don't give them what they want or expect, they won't come back.

Begin instruction at the level of student success, neither too far beyond her capabilities, nor so far below that the adult feels she is wasting time. The adult should not be overwhelmed; yet, she expects reading to be hard—if it is not, she feels that valuable time is being wasted.

The first challenge the teacher or tutor must deal with is finding out that point at which to begin instruction.

EXPLANATION

1. The attendance and retention of adult students is one of the greatest concerns of literacy teachers and researchers. Research has suggested that when attenders and nonattenders are compared in terms of situational deterrents to attendance, it is clear that both groups have job-schedule and family problems.

Further, some research indicates that adult readers often stop attending because they feel they are not being taught what they expected to be taught. Adult readers seem able to accommodate working with difficult material, but they leave if the material appears too easy. Students expect reading to be hard; if it is not hard, they feel as if they are not learning (Boraks and Schumacher, 1981).

Boraks and Schumacher assert that adult readers who felt that their teacher considered *how* they wanted to learn tended to stay in programs longer. Adult readers who did not feel that the teacher was sensitive to their wants and learning preferences dropped out.

2. Literacy educators should examine the possibility that resistance to education and reading may be a symbolic act. Schools or, by association, literacy centers may be environments that symbolize domineering authority and mainstream society. Adults who attend (or who are forced to attend) may act out their anger at the system implicitly or explicitly. Indeed, the ultimate action may be simply to drop out.

3. One way of reducing resistance is to make literacy learning immediately useful through the inclusion of everyday reading tasks, such as the newspaper, magazines, or tax forms. Although these materials may be scaled at a level beyond the obvious capabilities of the reader, the reader recognizes both the difficulty *and* the usefulness.

4. Student input is very important for progress and retention. Our adult students should be asked on a regular basis, "What would you like to learn, and how would you like to learn it?" At the very least, the content and the method of teaching an adult to read should be a negotiated compromise between teacher and learner. This, too, may lower resistance to learning.

5. "Wanting to read" is an imperative motivation for adult students who are either low literate or aliterate. Since very few people

choose to read informational reading material as a recreational activity, voluntary choice of reading materials is very important. Several studies have suggested that when students read for fun they outperform students who read only assigned material.

The bottom line? Students should choose what they want to learn—and what they both need and like to read.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Adjust the curriculum to fit what the student needs and wants to learn.

2. From the initial contact to the last, discuss pertinent information and offer options. Be as specific as possible about the time a phone call will be returned and when the student can expect to be placed in a class or with a tutor. Introduce yourself by name and provide names of the student counselor and future teacher. The first contact should be real and should provide concrete information.

3. Placement information (goals, assessment, background) should be as accurate as possible to ensure the best program placement.

4. In every class, ask yourself the question, "Is this the best instructional placement for this individual student?"

5. Provide some opportunity for group activity to promote motivation through peer support.

6. Build in time for student feedback to determine what activities worked best for the student and what activities did not work. An informal evaluation process should be continuous.

TO CONSIDER

1. Discuss/think about the relationship between pretesting and retention. What elements are involved in a good initial assessment? How much information about current literacy levels will you share with the new student?

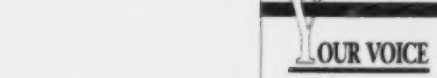
2. Discuss/think about the differences between teaching in a public school system where attendance is mandatory and in adult basic education where the audience is *not* captive. What are some measures we can take to ensure that the student returns next time?

3. Discuss with members of your literacy program: How can the site be altered to look less like a traditional school? How can instructional practices be altered to allow maximum autonomy for adults to choose what they want to learn and how they want to learn it?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 4, Secs. D and E.
- Read "Ethnographic Research on Word Recognition Strategies of Adult Beginning Readers" (1981) by Nancy Boraks and Sally Schumacher.
- Read "Reading Comprehension Instruction for At-Risk Students: Research Based Practices that Can Make a Difference," by James Flood and Diane Lapp, *Journal of Reading*, Vol. 33, April 1990.
- Refer to Giroux (1983), *Theory and Resistance in Education*, published by Bergin & Garvey.

A frustrated tutor at one literacy center reported, "Every student, regardless of level, is started at *Skill Book 1* (New Readers Press). No student in the program had ever reached *Skill Book 4*. As unbelievable as it seems, the program never even orders copies at that level." The program does no pretesting to determine level. It is no wonder that no one had learned to read fluently and independently.



Bob has been in and out of three different literacy programs. He says he's trying to find one that he likes. He says the programs don't know what they are doing half the time.

- What are the important issues in this situation?
- What questions would you ask to determine what Bob is looking for?

KEY #4

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY

Reading instruction can help meet students' real-life needs.

STUDENT VOICE

Robert spent ten years in the Army as a medic after dropping out of high school. He has now returned home to find that he cannot even get a job as an orderly until he gets his GED. He also feels this is just the first step; he must then continue to improve his reading so he can read about emergency medical techniques. He says, "The key to improving your reading is to want and need what you are going to read. You have to know it will help you."

W.S. GRAY'S 1956 DEFINITION OF literacy is as valid today as four decades ago: "A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is assumed in his culture or group." (Cook, 1977) The more recent definition is not much different: "Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (Kirsch, et al., 1986).

EXPLANATION

1. The definition of functional literacy has historically been a moving target, changing with the setting, culture, or country. Even within a setting, the definition changes year to year and is reanalyzed according to societal changes. Consider that, according to the 1920 census, a person needed only to write in any language to be counted as literate. Thus, counted within the ranks of the literate may have been those who could only write their names and a few other words (Cook, 1977, p.24).

2. Several recent writers have proposed that to define who is literate and who is not, we must analyze the ability to apply three types of literacy: *survival* literacy, *basic* or *minimal* literacy, and *functional* literacy. Still another writer cites "high literacy" or "cultured literacy." Recent Department of Education studies conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) analyze performance in *prose literacy* (understanding and using information from texts), *document literacy* (locating and using information from forms, tables, etc.), and *quantitative literacy* (mathematical) (Kirsch, et al., 1993). *Quasiliterate* or *semiliterate* can be applied to those who can read but not write.

3. An important study undertaken by Louis Harris and Associates in 1970 attempted to determine the number of American citizens who were not able to respond competently to the practical needs of everyday life (i.e. extracting information from ads, directions, forms, etc.). The results suggested that 4% of the population had serious deficiencies in conducting these tasks while 13% were functionally deficient.

4. A second well-known study, the Adult Performance Level Study (APL), was undertaken by the University of Texas in 1971. The APL applied a set of performance skills (reading, writing, speaking, problem-solving, computation) to five categories of general knowledge (consumer economics, occupational knowledge, government, health, community resources). From that study emerged objectives which comprise functional competence. Although the study was criticized for its middle-class bias and methodological flaws, it set the stage for more competency-based programs.

5. To be meaningful, functional literacy needs to be defined through the point of view of the adult learner—what is of immediate concern in life and what tasks need to be performed. When literacy is discussed,

Rosita's only son just moved to Texas. She missed him a great deal and wanted to be able to write to him. Her tutor said, "The more we plugged along in *Skill Book 2*, the less interested Rosita became. She was only concerned with learning fast enough to correspond with her son. So I put aside the workbook. At first, I had her dictate short letters to her son. I typed them up in duplicate ... giving her one copy to mail to him and one copy to keep. We made flash cards of the new words in each letter. Together, we generated rhyming words for this vocabulary and used the words in new sentences.

"Then we began working on handwriting. I typed the letters and had her copy them over before sending them. Finally, she began to compose letters on her own. They have become her 'experience stories' and we keep them in a notebook. I make cloze [fill-in-the-blanks] exercises from them, and we do lots of word-study skills.

"Motivation is high, and progress is great! The materials 'fit' the student and she looks forward to each session."

the stakes are high, "involving opportunities for personal advancement, labor force participation, and national awareness" (Venezky, Wagner, and Ciliberti, 1990, p.ix). There is some evidence that adult basic education teachers, and perhaps ABE textbooks, incorrectly assume the importance of functional-literacy topics (Hayes and Valentine, 1989). It seems that what we are teaching our ABE students, and the topics in which they are making the most significant gains, are the very areas they consider least important or which have the least important consequences if something is read incorrectly. Some studies have identified tax forms, medicine labels, and using road and city maps as topics that students say they need.

6. In an urban study conducted in Milwaukee (Negin and Krugler, 1980), 250 respondents described the types of literacy they needed for daily living. After the tasks were analyzed, a readability rating was found. The following tasks were mentioned as frequent uses of literacy: bank statements, food-preparation directions, job applications, cleaning-product directions, street and traffic signs, medicine labels, health and safety pamphlets, tax forms, bills, insurance policies and price/consumer information. Analyses of the readability of these materials ranged from a grade 6 level for one health pamphlet to a post-college level for insurance policies. Typical life-skill materials averaged grade 11. In Milwaukee, like so many other cities, the level at which functional literacy can be achieved is well above standard levels.

7. In 1988, the Congress of the United States supported the design and implementation of a national survey of the literacy skills of adult Americans. The National Adult Literacy Survey provided accurate and detailed information on the literacy levels of the adult population as a whole. The following definition of literacy was used as a framework for the study: *Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential* (Kirsch, 1993, p.3).

This study was unique in that it portrayed the belief that literacy is neither a single skill which is suited to all types of tests, nor is it an infinite number of skills, each associated with a particular type of text or material. Rather, the NALS test measures adult skills in three separate areas. *Prose literacy* measures the skills needed to *understand and use* information from texts including news stories, poems, editorials, and fiction. The *Document literacy* section measures the knowledge and skills needed to *locate and use* information found in materials such as job applications, maps, tables, and transportation schedules. And the *Quantitative literacy* portion of the test measures knowledge and skills to *apply* arithmetic operations either alone or sequentially.

It is striking to note that approximately 90 million adults performed in the lowest two of the five levels of proficiencies. Furthermore, 66-75% of the adults in Level I and 93-97% of those in Level II describe themselves as reading or writing "well" and they do not perceive themselves as being at risk! (Kirsh, 1993, p.xv).

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Before beginning instruction, identify the individual's immediate functional needs through a functional-competencies checklist or an informal interview. Prioritize current needs and plan to teach what is most essential first. Put needs into categories of "needs tomorrow," "needs within a month," "needs within six months," etc.

2. Ask the student to bring to each session any print material which needs prompt attention: for example, a prescription that needs filling, a medical insurance form, or a letter from a child's school. Reserve time in each session to attend to these immediate needs.

3. Use *real* materials, not facsimiles, whenever possible. Instead of reading sample ads from a text, have the student read the circular from the local market where she actually shops. Examine coupons for items the student actually buys. Plan a bus route to a place to which student needs to go, then go there.

4. Demonstrate to students how func-

tional skills can be broken down into manageable tasks. For example, when teaching a bus schedule, highlight with a yellow marker only one route at a time and focus on the starting point and destination to avoid getting bogged down with information which is irrelevant to the trip he wishes to make.

TO CONSIDER

1. In what ways could you incorporate letter writing into the curriculum (see Teacher Voice)? How would you expand exercises in correspondence into other language-arts activities?

2. What is your definition of "functional literacy"?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 2, Sec. D.
- Read *Toward Defining Literacy*, by Venezky, Wagner and Ciliberti, Newark: DE: International Reading Association, 1990.
- Read *Toward a Theoretical Framework of Adult Literacy* (1983) by Francis E. Kazemek, a doctoral dissertation available from UMI.

YOUR VOICE

You are about to begin teaching a basic adult literacy class at a homeless center. You plan to begin each session with a group lesson which addresses a functional literacy skill such as reading the bus schedule or using the phone book.

- Brainstorm a list of topics which would be relevant to this population.
- How would you assess individual needs to learn other topics of immediate concern to your students?
- What are likely to be the functional-literacy needs of a parent of an elementary school child? Create another list.

KEY #5

GOOD-READER HABITS

Competent readers demonstrate that reading is more than decoding.

STUDENT VOICE

Ricardo comes faithfully to literacy class. He is a very conscientious worker who completes written work meticulously and reads aloud carefully. He says, "Sometimes I get frustrated because I read so slowly. I try to make sure I get every part of every word right. I'm pretty good if I take my time. But it takes so long to sound it all out that I forget what happened at the beginning of the story."

IT IS THE HALLMARK OF THE GOOD READER to read quickly and fluently, and to predict upcoming words and ideas in a passage. The good reader may skip words, substitute words that mean the same but are not what appear on the page, and go back and reread phrases that did not make sense in the context of the passage.

EXPLANATION

1. Adult beginning readers are what Chall has termed "print bound." They carefully read each letter of each word, each word in a sentence. They perceive the goal of reading to be decoding, and often forget to understand (Chall, 1983; Gambrell and Heathington, 1981; Boraks and Schumacher, 1981; Forlizzi, 1992).

2. In simplified terms, there are two theoretical models of the reading process: bottom-up and top-down. The *bottom-up model* is based on the use of small components to construct the bigger pieces. Each letter/sound is the first building block of language. The building blocks are constructed to make words, and the words to create sentences. Familiarity with oral language allows us to make the connection to meaning.

A second model is called the *top-down model*, or psycholinguistic model. This model presupposes reading as a problem-solving activity. The reader attempts to guess at the meaning of a passage, using the fewest graphic (letter) cues necessary. As the reader guesses about meaning, she predicts what will come up in the rest of the passage, treating these ideas as provisional, as hypotheses to be proven or disproven after actually reading. If something doesn't make sense, or if an idea does not fit into the context, then the good reader slows down or stops and tries to understand.

Maybe the reader will sound out each word, reread what went before, get out a dictionary, or try any number of correction strategies in an attempt to understand the meaning. The poor reader may not use any strategies and may bypass the word, or perhaps use a strategy that isn't efficient.

3. The poor reader looks at each word as a hurdle, putting so much effort into attempting to decode it that there is no time or no brain power left to understand the meaning. Ask a poor reader what she read immediately following the reading of a passage and sometimes she cannot remember.

4. Rummelhart (1977) proposed the *interactive model of reading*. The researcher asserts that the two models of reading actually work simultaneously, that how much of top-down and how much of bottom-up effort is utilized is really determined by the proficiency of the reader, the difficulty of the textbook, prior reading instruction, and a variety of other factors.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Encourage the student to focus on reading for meaning, through a *prereading activity*. For example, if the passage is about the post office, ask the adult to describe the post office she uses and the tasks to be done there.

If convenient, make a short visit to the post office. Elicit any and all background knowledge the student may have on that subject.

2. Before reading, especially at higher levels, help the student to focus on titles, subheadings, pictures, graphics, and any nontext clues to the meaning that will emerge from the passage.

3. Encourage the student to ask herself questions before starting to read a passage. For example, if the title and pictures indicate that the passage is about the newest cars, then she should be asking, "What cars will be new this year?" and "How will they be different?", etc. before beginning to read.

4. Turn your passive reader into an active reader through highlighting and informal annotation. Your student may choose to hold a pencil in her hand as she is reading. When she hits a word she doesn't know, perhaps she could insert a question mark and then just go on. You might ask her to highlight the main-idea sentence with a yellow marker. Any techniques you can introduce that will turn your adult into an involved reader will help her to focus on meaning.

5. Very early readers may at first be able to focus only on decoding print. But as reading progresses, expect more and more meaning interpretation from the student. Ask her to extract the meaning constantly as she reads through a passage. To practice, stop your student's reading in mid-passage and ask her to tell you what the beginning of the passage was about. This gives her the message that you expect *comprehension*, not just oral reading.

TEACHER VOICE

The tutor reported that Willard's coping skills were remarkable. He had been employed as a woodworker for years. His conscientious attention to detail had enabled him to measure accurately and to follow verbal directions well. But Willard could not read.

When he began literacy class, he was placed in a phonics-based curriculum. He patiently sounded out every word. He progressed well, and his teacher planned new lessons in reading woodworking articles, which were of high interest to him. He compulsively sounded out every word and became bogged down by his attention to decoding.

His teacher guided him in moving along more rapidly, focusing on reading for meaning. Eventually, he was able to read more fluently, while obtaining a good understanding of the materials which he encountered.

TO CONSIDER

1. What signs would indicate to you that the adult student is becoming less "print bound"? How would you help this student to become a more fluent reader?

2. Do you agree with Rummelhart's assertion that reading is an *interactive model?* What factors interact in the process of reading?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 3, Secs. B and C.
- Read Kenneth Goodman's "Reading as a Psycholinguistic Guessing Game." (1967)

YOUR VOICE

You are teaching a GED class at the local community college.

- In what instances will you encourage your students to use a "bottom-up" model of reading?
- When will you suggest that they employ a "top-down" model?
- What models will be most helpful to students in a testing situation? Why?

KEY #6

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Adults bring a wealth of life experience to their reading.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE, OR SCHEMA, can determine how we approach reading, how well we comprehend a passage, and how much we remember from a reading.

STUDENT VOICE

Omar, a student from Venezuela, attempted to understand a passage about an Appalachian family that lived in a bus. Omar had just arrived in America a few months ago and still believed that American streets are paved in gold. As he was reading aloud to his tutor, he muttered, "Appalachia cannot be in America" and "This isn't true; it is not a real story." Ordinarily, Omar should have been able to read a passage at this level, but his rejection of the story details and his lack of background knowledge of Appalachia meant that he could not finish reading the passage or answer questions afterwards.

EXPLANATION

1. *Schema* is a term used to describe the cognitive framework upon which knowledge is stored, organized, and analyzed. Like the frame of a house, the walls, floors, and roof are all defined by the basic shape of the house frame. Boards can be added or taken away, but the frame remains intact.

Studies show that schemata can profoundly affect reading in the areas of reading speed, reading comprehension (both literal and inferential), information retention, use of context clues, and psychological acceptance or rejection of the information presented.

2. If we accept the claim that reading comprehension is an interactive/meaning-driven model in which structure, phonics, graphics, and grammar interact with prior knowledge and beliefs about the topic, then we must agree on the importance of that prior knowledge.

A student's prior knowledge assists during the hypothesis-generating phase of comprehension. In other words, the more one knows about a topic, the more efficient his judgment of the correctness of his hypothesis.

For example, in a study by Steffenson, Joag-Dev, and Anderson (1979), American and Indian university student groups both read two letters, one about an American wedding and one about an Indian wedding. The students read faster the letter which dealt with the customs with which they were more familiar, those of their own country. When asked to summarize the passages, the culturally different passage was recalled less well. In fact, in recalling details, readers often substituted wedding customs of the more familiar culture for the less familiar.

3. Several studies suggest ways in which our understanding of schema can be applied to instructional practice.

- When Wright (1929) prepared students for a history passage by asking them teacher-outlined questions and/or by asking them to generate their own questions, both types of questioning made a significant improvement in factual recall.
- Stevens (1981) found that reading a passage on an unfamiliar topic helped good readers answer later questions on a subsequent passage on the same general topic.
- Research suggests that the background information a reader holds on a particular topic often predicts how well the reader will understand a passage.
- Flood (1978) found that when students are asked to predict what will be found in a passage after reading only the first sentence, the students, as a whole, comprehended better even when they were wrong in their predictions.
- Legenza (1978) found that questioning techniques of any type (self-generated, teacher-generated, question games, expan-

sion questions, application questions, information questions) increased students' reading comprehension.

- Gillis (1981) found that instructional reading levels differed for adult basic education students depending on their familiarity with the topic of the material. When the material was familiar, the adults could read several levels beyond their measured instructional level.
- In several studies, teaching students to ask questions before, during, and after reading significantly increases comprehension by evoking prior knowledge and by motivating a student to read (Cohen, 1983; Dreher and Gambrell, 1985; and others).

TEACHER VOICE

Brenda was a trained tutor who used the Laubach materials provided by her program. Her student, Lici, was progressing fairly well but was not very interested in the stories in her workbook. Lici loved to cook for her four boys, fixing traditional Mexican foods. She did not relate to the menus offering egg salad and ham sandwiches, and she did not use the packages of instant potatoes, which were presented in *Skill Book 3*. Brenda took an interest in the foods Lici regularly prepared. They wrote recipes for how to prepare Mexican dishes and made shopping lists and experience stories about cooking.

Next, they went to the library and got books about Mexican foods. Then they read atlases and travel guides about Mexico. Once Lici was comfortable reading about her native culture, she was able to branch out to new topics.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Much of the reading a student does should relate to experiences with which he is familiar. For example, giving a young student a news article about Medicare may be less engrossing, motivating, and comprehensible than giving him an article about stereos.

2. Rule of thumb: If you are challenging the adult to read something that is difficult for him, make sure the passage relates to some content with which he is familiar.

3. Question students about the content of a passage before, during, and after reading it. This will help your student wake up the knowledge he has already and assist him in focusing on the true goal of reading: comprehension.

4. If the passage is about a topic unfamiliar to the reader, begin with a prereading activity. Talk about the topic, introduce key concepts, take a field trip, or look at pictures before asking the adult to read and comprehend.

5. For higher-level students, create a DRA (Directed Reading Activity), the purpose of which is to guide the student through the process of reading a difficult passage. This can be especially valuable. The steps in a DRA might include:

- Preparing, readying, and motivating a student to read.
- Silent reading.
- Vocabulary development and skills development.
- Silent and/or oral rereading.
- Follow-up or culminating activities.

TO CONSIDER

1. When you read an article about an unfamiliar topic, such as aviation engineering, what happens to your own reading?

2. How do you react to the claim made by Gillis (1981) that ABE students' reading levels were higher when the students were familiar with the material they were reading? Why do you think this happens?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 3, Sec. C.
- Read *Reading Comprehension Instruction, 1783-1987* (1990), published by the International Reading Association; Robinson, Faraone, Hittleman, Unruh, Eds. pp.139-160.

YOUR VOICE

You are teaching a class of adults and there are several foreign students in your group.

- What will you do to prepare them for a reading passage on Abraham Lincoln?
- How will students' unfamiliarity with American culture affect their scores on the reading comprehension section of a standardized test such as the ABLE, TABE, or ETS Tests of Applied Literacy Skills?
- Using a sample test, look at the passages and guess which ones would be difficult for a culturally different student. Which one do you think would create the most difficulty? Why?

KEY #7

PRACTICE, NOT PERFECTION

Step beyond error correction to develop readers' strengths.

STUDENT VOICE

Monica dropped out of school in the eighth grade. She had felt "lost." The work seemed always to be too difficult and she failed repeatedly. Now that she is back learning to read, we asked her what she felt was important to tell tutors and teachers. She said, "You have to choose books that the student can read. This is the only way to get confidence. Start with what she knows, and help her sound out new words. Have patience, and make her feel good about every little thing that she learns."

TEACHER VOICE

Candy walked into the tutor center and asked for help in improving her reading. After an assessment was done (Candy scored at a 5.5 reading level), Janet, a former high-school English teacher, started working with Candy in a pre-GED reading text. As Candy read through the selections orally, Janet stopped her

THE TRUE GOAL OF ADULT BEGINNING readers (0-6) is to make sense of the print world around them. These readers need to cope with life-skills print, such as a note from a child's teacher or a phone bill.

We would like every reader to be able to read from the start without mistakes or hesitations. But remember: *Reading is developmental in nature. The farther a reader progresses toward fluency, the fewer meaning-stopping errors, but perhaps more actual errors, will be made.*

Therefore, it is counterproductive to expect perfection from early reading. The teacher's goal is to help the adult extract essential information from print. This should be the primary objective of every lesson.

EXPLANATION

1. Not even the most advanced doctoral student has mastered the art of reading, for it is an ongoing, developmental process. Therefore, there is no specific point at which our adult students have "learned to read." As long as they continue to read, they continue to grow. In the past, our adult learners have been tested frequently, but they have been tested on isolated, short passages which have little or no relevance for them. The impact of their prior knowledge is ignored and focus is on discreet skills. Many programs are now replacing standardized testing with assessment of portfolios of the student's work. The portfolio is reviewed by the student together with the teacher. Tierney (1991) reports that: "Portfolios actually get students involved in reflecting upon what it is they're about; what goals they have; what they're achieving and how they have improved."

The teacher's role is changed, so that grading tests and handing them back is replaced by conferencing with students, noticing progress, helping students to articulate their strengths and weaknesses, and assisting them in setting realistic goals. Students are not subordinates to the teacher ... they are part of the process.

Portfolio assessment is often described as "collaborative," "cooperative," and literacy based. Tierney (1991) states that a key aspect of portfolios is their ability to serve as vehicles to link literacy experiences inside and outside the classroom. The portfolio provides a productive rather than judgmental assessment.

2. Another popular method for assessing both the reading ability and reading strategies of readers is *miscue analysis* (Goodman and Burke, 1972). The assessment method is based on Kenneth Goodman's landmark article, "Reading as a Psycholinguistic Guessing Game" (1967). The miscue analysis is based on the principle that oral reading errors (miscues) reflect reading competence. The student is asked to read oral passages and respond to comprehension questions afterward. Errors are classified as either "good errors" or "bad errors." Good errors are those in which the student names a word incorrectly but substitutes a word that preserves the meaning and syntax of the sentence. A bad error is one which does not fit the context either in meaning or syntax.

3. One problem of beginning readers is

TEACHER VOICE, CONTINUED

and asked her to sound out each mistake, then orally repeat the word ten times. Janet told Candy, "If you don't read every word very carefully and you make mistakes, you'll never learn to read well. I am going to make you a perfect reader." At the end of the selection, Candy couldn't answer the comprehension questions.

At break time, Candy picked up her coat and started walking out. The program coordinator asked to speak with her for a minute and convinced her to stay for the last half but reassigned her to a different tutor. During the next half hour, the coordinator worked with the tutor and offered the following analogy. "When a three-year-old child comes to you with scribbles on a page and tells you, 'Mommy, this is a plane,' you tell your child that it is a lovely plane and that he has done a superb job. When a five-year-old comes to you with two shapes that look like crossed sausages, you say, 'What a lovely plane! I see the wings and the body. Your planes are getting better and better every day.' And when your child, now grown into an aerospace engineer, comes to you and says, 'Mom, look at this plane I designed for NASA,' you say, 'I am so proud of your accomplishments. This is a beautiful plane.'"

Janet got the point.

that they are "glued to print." They read each word very carefully and perhaps correctly, but they read slowly, forgetting to make sense of what they are reading. At about the fourth level, readers begin to make more errors than at beginning levels. These readers are beginning to integrate their language background and life experience with what they see on the page, yet the errors may be qualitatively different from those made months before; these are likely to be "good errors" which preserve the meaning of the passage. In other words, the better the reader, the more mistakes she might make.

4. From Cooper and Petrosky (1976):

- Good readers take chances; they risk being wrong.
- Good readers bring their experience in a topic to the print on the page.
- Good readers guess or skip words they don't know and read on to try to get more information to find out what the words mean.
- Good readers try not to read too slowly.
- Good readers expect the reading to make sense.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. The adult student is not likely to "master" a specific progression of grade levels. Teachers should accept some ambiguity and move along in the areas in which the student shows strength rather than trying to remediate and perfect all language skills on a low level.

2. Students should be allowed to substitute words as long as the meaning of the sentence is not altered. Point out the "good errors" after the passage is finished, in a nonpunitive way, if you feel you must. Explain to the student that she has reached a more mature stage of reading in which she has begun to predict the meaning in a passage before the information is actually presented.

3. Encourage students to take chances. Help the beginning reader tackle a letter or article that is challenging for her. Show her that she can get some of the information even though she cannot decode each word.

4. Encourage the capable adult reader to judge the importance of the reading material and, if possible, encourage her to skim the text to extract just the information she needs.

TO CONSIDER

1. When do you make a decision to stop someone's oral reading to correct "errors" and when do you let the reader just continue through without correction? On what are you basing your judgment?

2. What might you consider good errors in a student's reading? Think of a few examples of "good errors."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 4, Secs. A, B, and C.
- Refer to Key #5, Good-Reader Habits.
- Read Kenneth Goodman's article, "Reading as a Psycholinguistic Guessing Game" (1967).

YOUR VOICE

Rosa is reading in *Challenger 2* and is nearly at the end of the book. Fluency is up and she seems to be reading more easily. But during the passage, Rosa mistakes the word *class* for *course*. When she recognizes her mistake, she goes back and corrects the word and says, "I'm so stupid. I can't even remember the words I know. I'll never learn to be a good reader."

- How would you respond to Rosa?
- Why was it easy for Rosa to mistake the words? Name several reasons.
- After you have read Key #8, Stages of Reading, come back and reread this "Your Voice." In what stage do you think Rosa belongs? What are some hallmarks of Rosa's current stage of reading development?

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KEY #8

STAGES OF READING

Gear instruction to the stage at which your student is functioning.

STUDENT VOICE

When Daniel entered the literacy program he was reading on a second-grade level. He progressed well and began to gain some fluency. But about that time, his tutor called the literacy coordinator with some concern that Daniel might be getting ready to quit. The coordinator gave the tutor some advice and some new books. Dan stayed in the program and has now joined a pre-GED class.

When Daniel was asked what his tutor had done to keep him coming to tutoring sessions, he said, "She started me in books about science. I was just tired of reading from the other books she gave me. She also showed me how to use the computer. I can do my work there and can write with the word processing."

His tutor explained, "Daniel was doing fine. But what I did was switch from learning to read to reading to learn. That seemed to make the difference."

ADULT READERS HAVE DIFFERENT INSTRUCTIONAL needs at different reading levels. Some researchers have labeled these levels "stages." An instructional program which takes into account the level of the reader and tailors the methods and materials to the adult's particular level will be the most successful.

EXPLANATION

1. Studies which compare adult good readers (generally college students) with adult poor readers (literacy program participants) find several striking differences. Poor readers: 1) see motivation as important to achievement, 2) rely on decoding far more than good readers, 3) do not see the importance of paragraph and story structure in discovering meaning, and 4) do not have the repertoire of strategies a good reader has (Gambrell and Heathington, 1981). Readers at different competency levels are qualitatively different in their approaches to the reading act and, therefore, have different instructional needs.

2. Jeanne Chall's (1983, 1987) description of the stages of reading will help in understanding these needs:

- **Stage 0: Prereading.** Below the first-grade level, the reader begins to grasp the concepts of left-to-right progression, can identify labels and signs, can write his name, gains some insight into the nature of words (e.g. rhyme), and can name the letters of the alphabet.
- **Stage 1: Decoding**

At this stage, the reader begins to understand sound-letter correspondences, becomes familiar with common letter patterns, focuses for a time on graphic clues (glued to print), and may ignore meaning in an effort to name the word. He can read simple texts and moves toward command of about 1,000 words.

- **Stage 2: Fluency.** Readers become "unglued" from print, and meaning-making takes a greater role; indeed, print clues and meaning clues become integrated. During this period, the reader is confirming already known knowledge and is still learning to read. Near the end of Stage 2, the reader may have a grasp of 3,000 words and reads somewhat fluently. *Chall believes that somewhere at the middle of this stage, adult literacy programs fail.* Many adult readers cease to make progress; they drop out of the literacy programs.
- **Stage 3: Learning the new.** If learning to read is the focus of Stage 2, then reading to learn is the milestone in Stage 3. The reader begins to increase his information store through books, newspapers, and magazines. Vocabulary also increases. In a child, this stage is akin to about the fourth grade—in which geography, history, and natural science are introduced and students are asked to derive information from print. Although technical words are kept to a minimum and facts are the primary content, the reader increasingly uses context and can guess at the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. For an adult reader, this stage can be compared to the functional level of literacy required.

Although the adult may not yet read critically or read abstract texts, he has met a competency adequate to carrying out everyday tasks.

- **Stage 4: Multiple viewpoints.** This stage implies that reading is now fluent and that complex materials, different writing styles, and inferential and critical reading can now be mastered. Multiple viewpoints are now comprehensible, this level is adequate for high-school textbook reading, and passing the GED is within reach.
- **Stage 5: Construction and reconstruction.** In this most mature stage, generally reached in college, if at all, the reader takes information from the page and reconstructs it into the individual's unique view of reality and the world. The reader can master great detail and complexity and can make judgments about what must be mastered and what merely comprehended. This is beyond the scope of literacy or adult basic education programs but remains a worthy goal of college reading programs.

3. Other researchers have found similar types in the adults studied. Keefe and Meyer (1988) also grouped adult readers. They differ from Chall in that they identified five learner profiles and did not necessarily see the progression of reading skills in defined stages. In Group 0 individuals, for example, they found a high incidence of disability, limited general knowledge, and inability to add single-digit numbers in math. In contrast, Group 4, had good listening capacity and fewer obvious disabilities. Meyer and Keefe (1990) also recommend specific instructional strategies for dealing with each type of adult reader.

TEACHER VOICE

When Nina first met her tutor, Jackie, Nina didn't know the alphabet, couldn't identify beginning sounds, and couldn't rhyme independently. When Jackie probed further, she discovered that Nina had grown up without a pencil, crayon, or other writing instrument in her home. Jackie correctly guessed Nina to be in Stage 0 of development.

Jackie put away *Skill Book 1*, which the former tutor had used unsuccessfully for the past four months and instead began working with Nina on readiness activities which would enrich Nina's experience with print before she put her back in *Skill Book*. Jackie taught the alphabet using letter cutouts that Nina could handle. She bought thick crayons and had Nina write the letters. She then had Nina use her fingers to trace the letters on the page, feeling the waxy texture of the crayon. She read to Nina and put stories on tape for her to listen to at home. She and Nina created T-shirt designs for Nina's grandchildren using puffy pens. Nina is now reading at about a second- or third-grade level and making steady progress. Her attendance is perfect.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. It is crucial to recognize the stage of reading in which your student is located and to tailor instruction to his special needs at that stage.

2. Watch for the growth which may indicate a transition to a new stage. Change your strategies as your student progresses; know what's coming next.

3. Take full advantage of the reading-to-learn stage when it appears. The student can become a self-generating reader at this point and may need you only to clarify some points.

TO CONSIDER

1. What is the difference between "learning to read" and "reading to learn"? Why does this transition mark an important juncture in adult reading development? In a lesson on bus schedules, how would you teach the schedule differently to a student in the "learning to read" stage and a student in the "reading to learn" stage?

2. What activities or teaching methods might help the reader become "unglued" from print?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 4, Secs. B and C.
- Refer to Key #15 for more information on the learning-disabled reader.
- Read *Stages of Reading* by Jeanne Chall (1983).
- Read *Reading for Meaning: Selected Teaching Strategies* (1990) by Valerie Meyer and Donald Keefe.

YOUR VOICE

Identify the weakest and the strongest reader in your program or class.

- Looking at Chall's classification of readers, where would these readers fit? Why?
- With Chall's classification in mind, how can you plan to meet the needs of each of the readers?
- What strategies might you use with a very beginning reader to encourage "reading for meaning" and to escape from the "print bound" stage for a short time?

KEY #9

METHODOLOGY

Consider several possible ways of helping adults learn to read.

Ed recently told his tutor, Sarah, that he is thinking about quitting. He is working in Laubach *Skill Book 3* and wants to move into what he calls "real reading." Sarah was trained by a literacy council which emphasized that each student must complete four *Skill Book* levels before any other material is introduced. Thinking Ed is "stuck," Sarah calls her council for recommendations of other material she could use to supplement. They tell her "to stick it out" with *Skill Book*, that eventually Ed will learn to read. This is the second time that Ed has tried to learn to read as an adult, and Sarah doesn't want to see him fail again.

THERE ARE TWO WIDELY DIVERGENT CAMPS on how adults best learn to read. The phonics method, exemplified by the Laubach approach, stresses sound-letter correspondence. The language experience/whole language camp believes that meaning-seeking is more important than learning how to sound out words. Perhaps the safest and wisest way is an eclectic approach, to provide some of each method.

The eclectic approach to teaching reading to adults offers the best chance for success. An approach which includes whole language activities, including meaning-centered strategies, phonics, oral-language development, and writing will best serve the diversity of students we see in our literacy programs.

EXPLANATION

1. There is wide disagreement among literacy researchers and program designers as to the "best" way to teach an adult to read.

The traditional approach of the Laubach methodology, which is primarily phonics-based and which deemphasizes meaning, is criticized for its lack of relevance to adult lives, its rigidity of vocabulary development, and the fact that Laubach makes little use of the rich background of experiences and emotions that the adult brings to each lesson (Meyer and Keefe, 1988).

On the other hand, the language experience approach, as a single mode of instruction, does not provide a great deal of support for the tutor who is seeking a structure for literacy lessons. The language experience approach does little to systematically teach phonics. Still, phonics can be one powerful tool in an adult reader's repertoire of reading skills.

2. It is important to remember that adults read some words in everyday life and, therefore, already come to literacy instruction expecting to gain meaning from print. At whatever level they comprehend, they try to read medicine labels, identify the contents of boxes from what is written on the package, and decipher notes sent home by a child's teacher.

But there is a problem. We often tell new adult readers that there is a "code to be broken" and that when they learn to use the code, fluent, advanced reading will evolve. We may tell them to forget the reading they already know by sight, to disregard the meaning they know exists in each word.

Often, we equate adults' learning-to-read process with that of a five-year-old, who may or may not know any print at all. And after a few months of instruction in a phonics-only program, when the student realizes that "breaking the code" is only one skill in a required wide range of skills, she becomes discouraged and drops out. We had given her hope, and then the hope was taken away.

3. Lewkowicz (1987) defends phonics instruction for older students. She says, "In my judgment, this widespread antiremedial word-attack consensus is based on too narrow a view of the role of decoding in developing reading competence" (p.51). We need

to accept that lack of decoding skills remains a serious handicap for older readers. But there is more than one way to teach phonics, and there needs to be additional research-based information on the best way to teach phonics to older readers.

4. Some studies report that the adults in our centers come to us with learning problems that prohibited them from learning to read in the far more intensive instructional setting of the public schools, perhaps using a phonics-based method.

For example, literacy students who have auditory-discrimination problems will have a particularly difficult time just hearing the sound that letters make. It may be impossible for some of these students to ever learn from phonics alone.

Some (but far fewer) adults may have problems with visual memory or visual discrimination, which may have prohibited them from remembering the "look" of words. If your adult says she is dyslexic, she may cue you into this deficit. Some studies cautiously report that intensive phonics instruction, *Skill Book*, and much more, may be the best method of instruction for this group.

5. Adult beginning readers might also have difficulty in abstract concepts, of which phonics is one. The adult has a greater chance of learning and remembering in a meaning-centered approach which is "real" to her. Meaningfulness and immediate usefulness empower the adult to learn outside the classroom situation and in the long span between literacy lessons.

6. Norman and Malicky (1984) believe that although both a skills/phonics approach and a process/experience approach can work with individual students, there is clearly a *best method* for each individual student. If we accept the fact that for each adult who seeks literacy services there is a unique set of learning problems that prevented normal reading progress, then we must also accept that an instructional program tailored to the individual is the most effective approach.

But there is a dilemma. Researchers have not yet found a way to predict which program would be most successful prior to the onset of instruction (Norman and Malicky, 1984). This remains a job for reading researchers. So the rule of thumb for tutors and teachers is quite simple: if an adult has stopped progressing in only one method, try the other approach or switch to an eclectic approach that covers all the bases.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Familiarize yourself with materials available in both phonics-based and language experience approaches. Try to identify the parts of each which seem most suited to your students.

2. *Be eclectic!* While using Laubach, try some experience stories, if for no other reason than variety. When you are using language experience and you find your student has a problem with a phonics sound, use the appropriate pages from Laubach.

3. *Be flexible* and stay one step ahead of your student. Have some new strategies in mind when you and your student need a change of pace.

TO CONSIDER

1. What is the primary method you use to teach literacy? Would you say that your approach is phonics oriented, language experience oriented, or eclectic? Why?

2. Respond to the reading supervisor that tells you to use the sequential phonics program only because "every adult has gaps in reading knowledge and we must make sure we fill in those gaps."

3. Respond to the reading supervisor who tells you to ignore phonics instruction but to use language experience stories exclusively with all of your students.

Continued

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 1, Secs. B, C, D, and E, for an overview of the models of literacy.
- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 3, Secs. B and C, and Chap. 4, Sec. C, for more on the reading process.
- For a balance of viewpoints, read Nancy Lewkowicz (1987) "On the Question of Teaching Decoding Skills to Older Students" in the *Journal of Reading*, Vol. 31, pp.50-57, and Valerie Keefe and Donald Meyer (1988), "The Laubach Way to Reading: A Review" in *Lifelong Learning*, Vol. 12, pp.8-10.
- Read *Whole Language: The Debate*, moderated by Carl B. Smith (1994), for a look at "both sides" of the general issue.

YOUR VOICE

Let's look at the following situation: You have a student, Mike, who is reading at about a second-grade level. You meet with him for one hour, three days a week. Draw a pie representing one hour of tutoring/teaching time.

- How would you carve up your pie, if at all? Would one slice be phonics, another some other method? What about functional reading?
- Fill in the percentage of time you expect to spend on each slice, and analyze the graph. Are you satisfied with the proportions?
- If you are not satisfied with the proportions, redraw the pie using new percentages of time spent on each method.

TEACHER VOICE

Jerry is working slowly in his literacy series book. He was getting frustrated by his inability to progress more rapidly. His tutor, Rick, thinks he has found a solution. First, he works on a lesson from the textbook. But after that lesson, Rick usually does an experience story, makes up new exercises on the phonics Jerry is working on, practices handwriting, and reads selections from a children's Bible orally. To finish the session, Rick uses the real life reading task that Jerry has brought in to do. Rick then reminds Jerry to bring in something else to read next week, perhaps a prescription or some correspondence from work.

KEY #10

COMPREHENSION

Deriving meaning from the printed word is the true goal of reading.

STUDENT VOICE

Vince proceeded to read the page from *Challenger* very rapidly, scarcely stopping at each period, and not stopping at all between paragraphs. He identified every word except one. After he had finished, he said that he had studied how to read that particular page all week. The tutor casually put a piece of paper over his book and asked him to tell what the story was about. He couldn't remember. The tutor asked him to tell anything at all that he had read ... any words? He couldn't even name the characters, tell a plot, or recall anything at all.

ADULT BEGINNING READERS DO NOT always seek meaning in what they read. Many adults, especially at the lowest levels, see reading as a process of decoding; when they can name a word, they feel that they are successful readers. This perception, according to research, hinders progress in learning to read. Therefore, adults must be frequently reminded that they read to comprehend a message.

EXPLANATION

1. Gambrell and Heathington (1981) compared the strategy variables of good college-level readers and adult beginning readers below the fifth-grade level. They found that while good readers knew sentence order and paragraph structure were important, many of the poor readers did not. Far more surprising, while 79% of good readers identified comprehension as the central goal in reading, only 21% of poor readers saw comprehension as important. These beginning readers also believed that word-for-word reading is easier than reading for general meaning.

2. Jeanne Chall (1983, 1987) hypothesizes that literacy progress slows during Stage 2 (see Key #8) when readers attempt to become "unglued" from print. Many of the adults at this stage cannot transfer the phonics instruction they have received to the comprehension of paragraphs. Results of a study by Norman and Malicky (1982) suggested that adults enter literacy programs with heavy reliance on grapho-phonic strategies (phonics) and with limited use of their experience in language. These adults need to approach reading from a different perspective, that of seeking meaning, before they can show progress on achievement measures.

3. Some studies have indicated that nearly 85% of the adults who are disabled readers perceive reading as a process of sounding out words or identifying the meaning of individual words. On the average, these adults made a three-month reading gain in three months of instruction. Extrapolating that ratio would assume that a literacy student retained in a program would become fluent readers in three to five years. However, very few students remain in programs long enough to achieve this gain, and those who do remain seldom sustain that rate of progress.

For the other 15%, for those readers who view reading as a meaning-making activity, gains of one and a half to two years were made in the same three-month period (Keefe and Meyer, 1980). Students are much more likely to remain in the program for this shorter duration.

4. Some researchers feel that the best way to assist adults in learning to read is to model natural acquisition patterns of a child who might be learning to read at home. Introducing words which are concrete and in the adult's experience make word-learning more important and meaningful. The whole language approach to instruction, which recommends integrating all language modes (speaking, reading, writing, listening, and

problem-solving), also mimics natural language-acquisition patterns.

5. Some research suggests that even adults in heavily phonics-based programs did not often use phonemic cues beyond the initial phoneme. In plain English, we spend lots of time teaching a phonics approach, but adults tend not to use it except for the first sound of a word. Therefore, instead of continuing to focus on phonics strategies which are not working for the student, the instructor often switches to memorization of sight words. (Boraks and Schumacher, 1981).

Bill described the progress of the student he was tutoring: "Alicia completed ninth grade, and she has very good decoding skills. She reads carefully, identifying each word in the sentence. Her reading is slow and laborious. She focuses so intently on 'getting' each word that she misses the meaning of the passage. Alicia failed the GED the first time she took it, and she felt extremely discouraged. We are working hard on comprehension skills ... I'm trying to get her to focus on ideas and content. We are previewing materials before reading. I try to get her to make up questions about the topic and think about what she might learn from a passage before she reads."

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Adult readers might need help in changing their focus from decoding to meaning-making. When they are first learning to read, decoding may indeed be the focus, but readers can become "stuck" on sounding out each word. They must be guided to look for meaning, focusing on understanding what they read from the overall context.

2. Setting the purpose for reading, whether it is set by the reader or by the teacher/tutor, is one way to focus on comprehension. You may want to begin with questioning such as, "From this passage, I want you to learn why the bear sleeps in the winter." This sends the clear message to the reader that the focus is on meaning.

3. The reading-writing connection fosters meaning-centered reading. When the reader is asked to respond in some form of writing about what he reads, the goal becomes comprehension of the passage. When writing the response, he reads it in the process. The result is double exposure to reading.

4. The teacher/tutor is a model of a successful reader. When the teacher/tutor can verbalize and demonstrate the process the student goes through in reading a passage, the new reader also learns the successful process. Modeling is perhaps the most effective tool in the teacher's bag of tricks.

TO CONSIDER

1. How do you react to Gambrell and Heathington's finding that only 21% of poor readers see comprehension as important? Are the students with whom you work more focused on decoding individual words or on gaining meaning from a passage?

2. Why do you think that beginning adult readers are so focused on phonics (decoding) instead of meaning-centered reading in the early stages, even though they try to understand words in their everyday world?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Key #9, Methodology, and #12, Whole Language.
- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 4, Secs. A and B.
- For guidance on writing, read "Writing instruction for adults: Present practices and future directions" by Padak and Padak *Lifelong Learning*, Vol. 12 (1988).
- For information on how adults define reading, refer to "Adult disabled readers: Their perceived models of the reading process," by Keefe and Meyer in *Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, 1980.

YOUR VOICE

Suppose you are tutoring a student who exemplifies Jeanne Chall's Stage 2 reader: attempting to become "unglued" from print. You want to help him to transfer his phonics instruction to the comprehension of paragraphs, to the new perspective of seeking meaning from reading.

- Outline some teaching strategies that will help the new reader focus on meaning rather than decoding only.
- Modeling (play-acting the role of a good reader) has been shown to be a very effective teaching tool to teach good comprehension strategies. Work with a partner to role-play how you would model reading a passage for meaning. You could use the Teacher Voice as your demonstration passage.
- Ask your partner what aspects of your demonstration were most helpful to him. How might you model differently when you are actually working with a student?

29

KEY #11

PERCEPTUAL MODES

Reading is related to how we receive and process information.

STUDENT VOICE

Jake, who has been coming to the community literacy center for over a year now, is clear when he tells his tutor how best he learns. "I can't learn it when I hear it. I have to see it and memorize it. Teachers have tried to teach me sounds, but I just can't do it. Give me flash cards. I'll copy them into my book."

READING IS A VASTLY COMPLEX AND INTERactive process which involves using the strengths of the learner while correcting strategies which may interfere with the comprehension process.

It is the quest of the literacy educator to discover how best the adult learns to read and to tailor the instructional program to that preference.

EXPLANATION

1. There are several areas of perceptual modality which a literacy educator should take into account when working with a student:

auditory modality—the use of listening to acquire new information.

kinesthetic modality—the use of touch and body movement to acquire sensory information.

visual modality—the use of vision in acquiring information.

2. Different methods of teaching reading rely more heavily on certain modalities than others. For instance, a phonics approach is believed to rely heavily on the auditory modality while the sight-word method depends on an individual's perception and memory for visual stimuli such as the letters a reader perceives on a page.

Many researchers have tried to prove that one method of teaching reading is superior to another for the average group of readers, whether that approach is sight-word, phonics, or language experience. The research, so far, fails to prove that one method, overall, is superior.

Adult education researchers do believe that a method tailored to the individual reader is the best approach. One method of teaching reading may succeed where another fails (Harris and Sipay, 1980), even though studies on children have not supported the contention that a program tailored to visual or auditory modalities is more effective than a general program. Since our adult readers are each so unique and have not succeeded in one type of reading program, it is sensible to try a different approach.

3. It is self-evident that many of the adults who come to our literacy programs *do significantly differ* from the vast majority of students who learned to read in regular elementary reading programs. We know that our students are significantly different in the percentage of learners who: 1) have auditory-discrimination difficulty, 2) have attention deficits, 3) suffer from vision problems, and 4) may have a deficit in memory and knowledge utilization. Because of these differences, the effect of modalities may be more significant than in the general population of readers.

Boraks and Schumacher (1981) conclude that adult readers who feel that their teachers consider what they want to learn and also *how* they want to learn are more likely to stay in a literacy program. For that reason alone, a tutor or teacher would do well to try to identify the reader's learning preference.

4. Some adult readers exhibit maladapta-

Adria came from Cuba when she was a small girl. Her family moved frequently and so she ended up attending more than six different schools before she dropped out in tenth grade. Since then, Adria has worked steadily in a garment firm and has put three sons through college. Her tutor, Joan, knows how bright Adria is even though her literacy level is quite low. Adria is progressing extremely quickly in traditional literacy material. She also knows that Adria will remember almost everything told or read to her.

While Adria is still struggling in low-level literacy materials, Joan is reading aloud short American novels to her. Joan just finished a Joseph Conrad story, "Heart of Darkness," and is beginning to read excerpts from *Grapes of Wrath*. Joan asks interpretive questions, discusses symbolism, and introduces challenging vocabulary words for Adria to learn. Adria is proud that she is "reading" some of the same books her sons have in college courses. In the meantime, she can't wait for her own literacy level to catch up.

tions in the reading process. For example, readers (especially beginning readers) seem "glued to print" and attempt to comprehend the passage exclusively through the information in the text without using their vast resources of preexisting knowledge. Their preference for using the stimuli on the page results in a very literal, and often misleading, interpretation of meaning.

On the other hand, some adults choose to overrely on background knowledge without using the text-based (printed) information at an appropriate level. They may see that the passage is about dolphins only and then jump to interpretations of the passage based on a TV program they once saw without using the information in the text. Pearson (1984) asserts that this may be an escape strategy for the poor reader who lacks confidence in his ability to decode text.

Adult beginning readers will attempt to use the mode of learning that is most comfortable and habitual even though these modes may be less successful than a combination of approaches to reading.

5. Perceptual tempo is another area of learning style. In short, it is the rapidity of response to questions and problem-solving. There are two styles noted by Kagan (1964):
reflective style—learners who show few signs of hyperactivity, who persist in completing tasks, who critically examine answers before responding. These learners are better in vocabulary development, recall of events, recognition of main idea, and reading for details.
impulsive style —a learner who may act on an initial hunch involving little critical analysis of the rightness or wrongness of the answer. These learners have more word-recognition errors at all levels, give partial answers, and have fewer self-corrections when an error is made.

Research suggests that an impulsive style is very common in adult literacy students; therefore, teaching students to slow down and to think about responses before answering may aid in reading comprehension.

6. Locus of control (see Key #2) is an additional area highly related to many issues in adult education, including the willingness to take risks in achieving an education, the retention of adults in programs, and a willingness to work hard to reach goals.

The control an adult learner feels in the learning environment can significantly affect:

- the risks the learner is willing to take.
- the belief that strong effort will ensure success.
- the understanding that failure is only a temporary setback and that subsequent efforts may lead to success.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Identify *how* your reader has learned information in the past. Has he relied on verbal information or does he feel more comfortable if things are written down? Initially, use that strength most often in teaching.

2. Some practitioners recommend "training" an adult to "see better" or to "hear better" through visual or auditory drills. There is little evidence to support the usefulness of this effort. An adult who can't seem to learn by phonics is best put into a style of reading program which emphasizes the visual.

3. An adult can be persuaded to modify comprehension-mode preference (text-reliance vs. background-knowledge reliance) through metacognitive training. One method is for the teacher to model his or her own cognitive processes when trying to understand a passage by explaining orally to the student the strategies being employed.

TO CONSIDER

1. The use of kinesthetic techniques (involving body movement) to learn reading has been explored by many researchers who have suggested various methods to improve reading through the use of touch and movement. What programs of teaching reading or what individual teacher strategies have you observed that employ kinesthetic involvement? At what level do you think the

kinesthetic approach works best?

2. Which philosophical approach to teaching adult reading do you think is superior—

- finding out the deficits in how an adult reads and teaching strategies to remove (remediate) those deficits?

or

- identifying the strengths or preferences an adult has for reading (e.g. sight words) and teaching primarily using that approach?

3. Think about the adult ed class you know best. Identify three students you think exhibit a reflective tempo and three students who exhibit an impulsive tempo. Since the impulsive tempo student seems to have the greatest difficulty reading, devise two or three techniques to get that student to slow down to think.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 1, Sec. E, and Chap. 3.
- For a more comprehensive approach to a complex topic read "Individual Differences Research in Reading," by Spiro and Myers in P. David Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of Reading Research* (1984).

YOUR VOICE

Although commercial "learning preference inventories" are available that will help you assess the learning strengths and weaknesses of your student, you can devise your own style inventory by asking the student some leading questions.

- Devise a mini learning-styles inventory by creating a short interview format. List five or more questions you would have on that interview in order to determine how the new reader learns best.

KEY #12

WHOLE LANGUAGE

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are interconnected skills.

"... WE ACQUIRE SPEECH AS WHOLE *language, surrounded with purposeful talk in meaningful contexts all day, every day. Yet we routinely teach literacy to adult learners as if reading and writing can be separated from other language activities.*"—Lehman, Johnson, and Lehman, 1992, p.15

Language is learned most effectively when all aspects of language—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—are taught together.

EXPLANATION

1. "Whole language" involves the integration of all language skills into one curriculum. Instead of teaching reading as a set of individual skills, it is taught through dynamic interactions which lead students to create meaning from the written passage. A series of interactions, in a variety of individual contexts, is provided to focus on the reader as a whole person (Rose, 1993).

The principles of whole language are based on the following assumptions:

- Reading and writing develop concurrently and interrelatedly rather than sequentially.
- The primary reason for the reading act is the construction of meaning, much like the listening act; the primary goal of writing is the transmission of meaning, which is the same goal as for speaking.
- Most beginning readers spend far too much time filling out worksheets and circling answers. They spend far too little time actually reading. Language is acquired through use, not through practicing separate parts.
- Language, including all the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, is learned most easily when it is purposeful, functional, meaningful, and *whole.*

In summary, Carl Smith (1994) explains the philosophy of the whole language movement as one in which: "Language is a complex system for meaning-making through socially shared understandings which individuals acquire through immersion and intentional use within a language community or social group" (p.xx).

Proponents argue that language is a social process which is driven by the purposes of the individual learners, and that acquisition occurs within the context of their cultures.

2. Many adult literacy classes fail to provide students with experiences in listening to expose them to good literature. Some instructors are now beginning to borrow the concept of the elementary school "Big Books" by choosing relevant literature and reading aloud for some part of each class. They make transparencies of each page of the book so that the teacher can point to each word as it is read. Students follow along, tracking the words and reading silently as the story is displayed on the overhead projector. The oral reading of a selection is followed by a discussion of content and vocabulary derived from the reading. Students are asked to react to the readings by writing responses in their journals. An instructor who used this approach in a GED class made the following comment: "I think the communal reading enriched our lives in many ways, and I know

STUDENT VOICE

Angelita says she enjoys coming to Maureen's ABE class because, for the first time, she is really reading a newspaper and knows her current events "like no tomorrow." Every morning, Angelita *reads* an article from the morning paper, *discusses* it with fellow students, *listens* to the background information Maureen supplies, and *expresses* her own opinion about the event. The class then brainstorms a list of vocabulary words that are germane to the topic. Afterward, Angelita *writes* a short paper about her views, which she will later read to the class.

the experience with my students has touched me. Also, the whole language philosophy of teaching reading and writing through good literature was affirmed for me, a new convert" (Hicks, 1992, p.25).

Students learned that reading is not just an act of decoding but an act of communication by which rich meanings can be transmitted.

3. When our adult learners were in elementary school, most were placed in the lowest reading group for intensive skills practice. Research suggests that poorer readers received qualitatively different instruction than good readers. The poor readers focused more on intensive drills in skills like phonics and spent less time on critical thinking, symbols and abstractions, and writing responses to reading.

There is ample evidence that the adults we see in literacy programs seem to be deficient in their ability to deal with abstraction; adult beginning readers tend to personalize abstract concepts in an effort to inject concreteness and avoid abstraction. Consequently, the more abstract the concept in the text, the less it is comprehended (Boraks and Schumacher, 1981).

Instructors interviewed for *How Adults Read* face the deficit in one of three ways: 1) they teach reading using only concrete concepts, 2) they introduce lots of abstract passages and try to remediate the deficit, or 3) they teach with a variety of passages but attempt to develop abstract concept skills through the use of oral language.

What is true for oral language is true for written language: what you can say you can write, and what you write you can read. Therefore, even if your adult can't read well, higher-order thinking skills can be first taught through speaking and listening.

4. Reading and writing are developmental processes; the more advanced the stage of development, the closer to the perfect model of reading and writing. Children's writing, for example, begins with learning how to hold a pen, advances to scribbling, moves to drawing, evolves into a graphic representation of letters of the alphabet, and, finally, results in the writing of the proper letters contained in the targeted word in proper sequence.

With adults, as well, development proceeds slowly along a continuum. However, there is some evidence that a print-rich environment accelerates the process and expands the literacy base. A print-rich environment for adults contains opportunities for reading and writing practice. For example, this climate of literacy might provide an uninterrupted time and a quiet place in which to read. It would provide magazines, newspapers, and books to read for enjoyment. It might also include an opportunity to practice writing through correspondence with others.

5. Studies have shown that the hardest-to-serve adult students often have multiple handicaps. These students generally learn best with an approach that is *holistic*, not analytical. Whole language encourages the integration of tactile and kinesthetic activities such as writing stories and journals, choral reading, books-on-tape, and role playing. It can also include a "hypermedia" component: a computer format in which several different media are used in a sequence the student chooses. For example, in learning about George Washington, a student might view a movie clip on CD-ROM showing the crossing of the Delaware before reading a paragraph about this event (Dillner, 1994).

Approaches which stress only phonics break apart the language, decontextualize it, and separate the use of language from the natural environment in which print exists. In other words, phonics study does not draw upon the words the adult recognizes from his environment and does not utilize the print environment surrounding the adult.

6. Character journals are now being used in whole language classrooms to encourage the emotional involvement of the learner. After choosing material which is of personal interest, the student interacts with the text by keeping a written diary in which he assumes the role of the main character. The reader actually "becomes" the character and keeps an ongoing journal by writing about

TEACHER VOICE

Harry teaches a literacy class in the community room of a downtown church. His students are all beginning and low-level readers. His personal concept of teaching is that students need to be immersed in language because many of them live in an environment almost devoid of print. His classroom is plastered with posters of inspirational sayings. He begins his class by orally reading an article, poem, or short story and involves students in discussion of the issues raised in the reading. Each class includes a look at an article copied from that day's newspaper, and time is reserved to talk about current events of the week. Harry makes sure that each student takes home one of the books from the classroom library which he has set up, and he encourages students to keep a journal of reflections.

episodes in the first-person voice of the character. This journaling allows the reader to "walk in someone else's shoes" while reading and to take a personal interest in the outcome of the book. By becoming deeply involved with the character, the reader may experience a new level of understanding and enjoyment of the written material (Hancock, 1993).

ECHO READING:
You read. The student repeats.

DUET READING:
You and the student read together.

CHORAL READING:
A group reads together.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Surround the new reader with as much print material as possible. Bring in a variety of high-interest sources. Help the student to read personal mail and advertising circulars. Give the student magazines and newspapers to keep, encouraging him to focus on the pictures and headlines when text is too difficult to read. Provide opportunities for literacy independence by:

- photographing signs on buildings in the community.
- making a set of flash cards of street signs.
- giving the student sample form letters to adapt when needed.
- helping the student to make a file of index cards containing names and address.
- assisting the student in making a list of emergency and frequently used phone numbers.

The ideas are infinite ... be sure to provide each student with personally relevant materials!

2. Focus on integrating all of the language arts in each lesson. Put passages on tape for listening and follow-along. Encourage echo reading, duet reading, and choral reading (see box at left). Teach main idea and inferential skills through storytelling. Provide opportunities for the learner to teach you how to do something by describing the steps in a process through oral language. Listen to short stories on tape for enjoyment.

3. Have the student focus on the author as a person trying to convey a message, much like a TV or radio announcer. More advanced students might focus on the audience for which a story is written, on the mood of the passage, and on the author's tone.

4. Discuss the dialects of language which are presented in literature by taking passages from a novel such as *Huckleberry Finn* and exploring how the spoken language reflects the region and the era in which the novel is set (Southard and Miller, 1993).

4. Encourage your student to respond in writing to what he has read. This expression may be in the form of a drawing or a list of important words, while the more advanced reader can write a short reaction to what he has read.

5. Teach study skills and model good learning behaviors through listening and speaking activities. Help students *predict* what characters will say, formulate questions before they hear the dialogue, and attend to the detail in the spoken passage. Guide them in the techniques of note taking and summarizing.

6. Use emotionally charged and highly motivating materials. Allow students to choose their own reading material, and encourage reading for enjoyment. (That may include use of the popular press, even supermarket tabloids and other controversial material, as texts for some learners.)

TO CONSIDER

1. Some literacy programs advocate the use of USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading) as a part of every class. Is this practice applicable to your program or tutoring situation? What whole language principles does this practice support?

2. In your opinion, what is the role of phonics in a whole language program?

3. Brainstorm a list of the pros and cons of using a whole language approach when teaching adults. Choose sides and debate this issue with a partner.

Continued

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 3, Sec. C, and Chap. 4, Sec. C.
- Read *How to Use the Whole Language Approach*, by Elinor P. Ross (1989).
- Read "Whole Language for Adult Literacy," by Lehman, Johnson, and Lehman, in *Adult Learning* (Feburary 1992).
- Read *Whole Language: The Debate*, moderated by Carl B. Smith (1994).
- For a wealth of whole language instructional ideas consult *Whole Language for Adults: A Guide to Instruction*, by Cheatham et al. (1994).

YOUR VOICE

Suppose you are introducing the U.S. Presidency to your pre-GED-level class.

- Name at least five activities you might do in class which support the principles of a whole language approach to instruction.
- List the materials you would use and explain how you would implement each activity.

KEY #13

SELF-MONITORING

Problem-solving is an integral skill for reading.

THINKING ABOUT ONE'S OWN THINKING, or knowing what one knows, is called *metacognition.* Being aware of problems as they arise and applying solution strategies are critical to fluent reading.

STUDENT VOICE

At a local community-college literacy program, Sheila expressed some frustration with her reading: "You have to know what you read, or it's not worth reading. Comprehension is the key to reading. You can read and not understand ... then you don't learn."

EXPLANATION

1. Recent research is starting to discriminate between two types of comprehension: the ability to understand the meaning of a reading passage and the ability to monitor one's understanding. What is involved in monitoring one's understanding?

- *Knowing when you don't understand, then implementing strategies which will help you understand.* Poorer readers don't keep track of their understanding; they continue to read on, even though they missed the essential information needed to understand the rest of the passage.

Adult poor readers seem to use fewer problem-solving strategies and use them less often than good readers (Chou Hare, 1981).

- *Judging the difficulty of a reading passage and deciding whether or not one has the necessary skills to read the passage competently.* Research suggests that adult beginning readers either overestimate or underestimate the level at which they read. Better readers have a fairly good assessment of their skills.
- *Deciding what level of competence you need to get the job done.* For example, when an adult reads a *Reader's Digest* article for the fun of it and doesn't understand or remember the facts, it doesn't really matter. But if her boss gives her a set of directions for the new machinery which was just installed, the level of competence needs to be quite high. Some studies suggest that poor readers don't adjust their reading rates or strategies to suit the particular reading task.

2. By all rights, adults should be better at comprehension monitoring than children because they have a greater stock of life experiences from which to draw. It is the flaw of the adult beginning reader if this vast experience is left outside the door when she sits down with the tutor to "learn to read."

Research has shown that beginning and poor adult readers are likely to focus on words as they stand alone, and not to attempt to make sense of (comprehend) word, phrase, and sentence meaning. In a way, they have such a hard time just naming the word that they forget to understand (Gambrell and Heathington, 1981).

Also, as mentioned in Key #2, the adult reader may have learned passivity in the learning situation and, therefore, will need to be moved into a more active, involved role in reading. This role will entail thinking about meaning and questioning at every level if the passage is being understood. When the adult reader meets a problem, recognizes the problem, and takes steps (strategies) to solve the problem, then she is moving closer to what a good reader does.

The goal of the field of metacognition is to teach people to be independent learners through the monitoring of their understanding.

3. It is the critical role of the tutor and

teacher to determine:

- if the adult recognizes the problem in reading.
- if the adult has helpful strategies to use once the problem is recognized.

Listening to your student read can provide a window into the person's reading processes. Some teachers encourage their adult students to attempt to verbalize how they use reading strategies. The teachers then attempt to analyze the verbalizations — "protocol analysis" — to see if the strategies are deficient or incorrect. If the adult has a only a limited repertoire of strategies from which to choose, then the teacher can provide other strategies which the adult can employ in problem-solving situations. Incorrect—that is, unproductive—strategies that the adult may have can be remediated.

4. There are several strategies an adult can use to solve the problem of an unfamiliar word or a difficult sentence.

- Ignore the problem and read on, hoping to sort it out later on.
- Reread the word or sentence.
- Try to decode the word using phonics, or analyze the sentence.
- Read a difficult sentence orally to attempt to use speech to assist in comprehension.
- Take out a dictionary (at an appropriate reading level) or other reference source.
- Ask someone who might know the answer.
- Give up in frustration and quit reading.

Knowing which strategies to use for which problems in reading is a complex issue. For starters, adults who read a lot will learn through trial and error which strategies are useful—that is, productive—and which are not.

5. Tutors can have a very special role in teaching the adult beginning reader how and when to use certain strategies to solve a comprehension problem.

Tutors and teachers can model good reading for the adult very simply and effectively. As the tutor reads, verbalizing about the process being used, talking about meeting unknown words, and modeling some strategies to use when meeting a comprehension problem are the most effective methods to teach an adult.

Maggie, an experienced tutor, says that Linda is often at a loss as to how to begin reading a story; she just can't seem to get a running start.

Last week, they began reading a challenging nonfiction story about frogs. Maggie switched chairs with Linda, picked up the book, and role-played being the student.

Maggie started out by saying, "Let's first look at the pictures in the book to get an idea of what this is about." After paging through the book, she said, "Now what do I already know about frogs? Let's see, I know ..."

Through the process of modeling, Maggie passed on her experience as a proficient reader to Linda, who, hopefully, will learn to do the same.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Raise the learner's activity level prior to reading the passage. Talk about what will probably appear in the passage. Look at all the graphic clues, titles, and subtitles. Look at the length of the passage. Evoke prior background knowledge about the topic. Put a pencil in the learner's hand and encourage her to use it in any way that feels comfortable, whether by simply underlining important words or by writing notes in the margin.

2. Have the adult define her purpose for reading before she begins to read. She should judge how difficult she expects this passage will be. She should judge how well this passage must be read. She should master each detail, such as following directions for a new medication, or decide that this reading is just for enjoyment.

3. Guide the learner toward problem-solving. If the learner meets a problem and judges it to be an important one, then teach all the different strategies that may be used to solve it. Model some of these strategies for the learner. Teach those strategies you think might be useful, such as dictionary skills, rereading, or phonics analysis.

TO CONSIDER

1. Before a reader begins a passage, she should ask herself several prereading questions. What are some of the prereading questions any proficient reader would ask? Make a list.

2. From what you know, what psychological or social factors may inhibit a student's full use of metacognitive strategies?

Continued

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 3, Sec. C.
- To read more about modeling techniques see: 1) for all readers: Annemarie Palincsar and Ann Brown, "Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension-Monitoring Activities, *Cognition and Instruction*, Volume 1 (1984); 2) for ABE and GED readers: Mary Heller, "How Do You Know? Metacognitive Modeling in the Content Areas," *Journal of Reading* (1986).

YOUR VOICE

1. Imagine that you are an ABE tutor/teacher.
   - With a partner, role-play your approach to reading a difficult passage about the solar system.
2. Teaching a student to monitor her understanding of a story may be particularly challenging.
   - Can you list three techniques you might use to remind the reader to comprehend?
   - Are there any kinesthetic/tactile techniques which may remind the reader to monitor her comprehension?

KEY #14

SELF-ESTEEM

Cause or consequence, feelings about self correlate to reading ability.

STUDENT VOICE

Alyssa sat in the small room of the literacy center talking to the reading specialist. "I just feel I can't do this ... I never did feel that I could read. Everyone was always telling me I was stupid and couldn't do nothing. Now you tell me I can if I really try to. I just don't know who to believe."

Adults who enroll in literacy programs may be entering with a mixed bag of negative and positive internal messages and rationalizations. At this moment in their lives, they may possess the courage to make that phone call and register for class; yet, fear, anxiety, self-doubt, and hesitation are not far in the background. One of the most important positive messages the adult student is acting upon in enrolling in literacy classes is his or her perception of self-esteem or self-worth.

1. Self-esteem hides under many different names: self- perception, personal efficacy, self-concept, self-love, etc. Whichever label you choose, for an adult, this element of self-appreciation, when it is both realistic and positive, points to an individual likely to be mentally healthy and to exhibit an energetic, outgoing personality in her interactions with the world.

In contrast, the individual who suffers from a lack of self-confidence or a persistent self-hatred may be dysfunctional both in establishing personal and business relationships, and in her ability to take personal action in order to improve a bad situation. A sense of despair pervades each day.

2. Educational researchers are not certain whether a low level of self-confidence is the cause or the consequence of adult literacy, but literacy learners exhibit levels of self-esteem which are below the average adult (Rance-Roney, 1994).

The causes of low self-concept are extremely interactive and complex, but several key areas are suspect. Instability of any type in early childhood and adolescence, whether parental or educational, may lead to lowered self-esteem. Family stress because of unemployment, parental abandonment, separation, or divorce lessens the child's belief in a supportive, stable, and predictable world. When parents are concerned first about survival of selves and family, there is little time to set guidelines for children and little energy to focus on school achievement.

Although financial comfort, religious values, and the trappings of middle-class life are not directly related to self-worth, a parent in social and financial turmoil is less likely to "become a bastion from which the child can gain strength and reassurance, someone who will give advice and perspective" (Coopersmith, p.176).

3. Enhancing positive self-esteem is a more complex task than literacy educators have long believed. Merely comforting the adult with positive feedback may not lead to increased self-esteem. Recent models for fostering positive self-perception focus on leading the adult to confront and cope with the negative messages we all receive every day, and to view this negative feedback as an inevitable part of human existence. When literacy educators provide only positive feedback without acknowledging the learning difficulty or reading deficiency now facing the adult, the educator is allowing the student to avoid facing the problem and is not moving the student toward self-knowledge.

4. There is little concrete guidance for

the literacy educator on how to foster a positive self-esteem in the learning situation, but the general research suggests several approaches. First of all, approach literacy learning as a job to be done, in spite of the difficulties and hurdles. Secondly, confront the excuses and assist your student in problem-solving ways to overcome the difficulties. Thirdly, provide the student with challenging, but not impossible, assignments, with a firm expectation that the assignment can be and will be completed.

Finally, foster high levels of individual autonomy, "in which individuals can be cared for, but are still expected to exercise their individual will and accept the responsibility of making their needs known, and finding acceptable ways of satisfying these needs" (Bednar, Wells, and Peterson, p.229).

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Focus on the progress made by literacy students, no matter how small the gain in competence. Yet, provide realistic feedback and reality checks about both the current state of reading and how long it may take to make significant gains.

2. Have high expectations for improvement; demand high effort. Contrary to popular belief, adult students interpret easy assignments as further evidence of incompetence; conversely, when challenging demands are made in the classroom, adult students interpret this as evidence that the instructor believes in their intelligence, which in turn bolsters confidence in the ability to learn.

3. Be consistent in requirements and demands. Provide a sense of learning rhythm and consistent expectations for homework and study. Although adult students have great demands on their time and energy outside of the classroom, the message that learning is of utmost importance and can only be gained through significant personal sacrifice and effort is crucial to learning effectiveness. Although personal emergencies are to be recognized, the business at hand is learning and the adult student should be asked to make up missed work.

TO CONSIDER

1. To what extent do you believe low self-esteem is a *cause* of reading problems? A *consequence?*

2. What is the relationship between an individual's autonomy and that person's self-esteem?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 5, Secs. C and D.
- Read the introduction to the psychologist's text, *Self-esteem: Paradoxes and Innovations in Clinical Theory and Practice*, Richard L. Bednar, M. Gawain Wells, and Scott R. Peterson (1989).
- Refer to Coopersmith (1967), *The Antecedents of Self-esteem.*

Gabriella listened patiently to Carlos for the first 45 minutes of the hour and a half she was planning to spend with him. Carlos was expressing his frustration about how tired he is when he gets home from work at a local garment factory, and how he has to help his kids with their homework and help his wife with kitchen chores before falling asleep in front of the TV with his GED book in his lap. Gabriella had been told by her literacy mentor that you have to first listen to the student before that student will be ready to listen to you. This was OK for the first two weeks, but this was the fourth week. More than half the time in each of the previous sessions had been devoted to Carlos' frustration and very little actual learning was getting done.

Gabriella decided that she and Carlos would agree to a limit on the time spent in "open discussion" and after that, they would get down to the learning business. In fact, as Carlos identified a barrier to getting the home exercises done during the open discussion, they would problem-solve some coping strategies together and write them down in the back of his notebook to refer to. So, when Carlos felt tired, he knew enough to take a brisk walk in the cold air, make himself a strong cup of coffee, and sit down at the bright kitchen table to work.

YOUR VOICE

1. Role-play with a partner a situation in which the partner is the student and you are the tutor/teacher. The student has just gotten an algebra problem wrong. Using the information on self-esteem you have just learned, what verbal messages would you give that student?
2. Working with a partner, write a long list of excuses you have heard from students as to why they didn't finish a home exercise or read a passage. Together with your partner, write "OK" next to the excuses you think are important enough to release the student from expected work, and write "No" next to the excuses that could have been overcome in an effort to complete the assignment. Formulate the policy you would explain to a student about the "No" excuses.

KEY #15

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Adult learning disabilities require special teaching techniques.

STUDENT VOICE

As children, many adult learners were not recognized as special learners or did not receive the special-education services that are available today. Richard said, "I never really started to learn until I worked with my tutor. In school, I could never understand. I was pushed ahead from grade to grade to get rid of me. I guess I gave the teachers some problems. No one took the time to help me. I felt stupid and so finally, I dropped out. I should have been in a special class; I learned things real slow." Miguel said, "I never could learn to read because I just couldn't pay attention. I was always fooling around ... never focused."

THERE IS A SUSPICION THAT A SIGNIFICANT proportion of the adult literacy population is learning disabled (LD) in some way.

EXPLANATION

1. Very few literacy programs make an attempt to identify students who have learning disabilities, even though this is of primary concern to teachers and tutors alike. The stock answer is that they will be taught to read in the same way anyway.

But the truth is, there are special techniques and approaches which can make learning more efficient for certain types of disabilities. The disability may occur in a multitude of areas, such as visual, auditory, memory, or attention deficits. Although we are not equipped to diagnose a specific deficit, we may, at least, identify a strength that we can use to teach this adult to read, and we may try different instructional strategies in the hopes that one will work.

2. An adult LD student may guess frequently, substitute incorrect words, add or delete letters or symbols, and transpose letters. He may have difficulty with comprehension, rereading slowly and still not understanding. He may lose his place on the page or within the paragraph. The LD adult's worst deficits may be weak visual memory for spelling or the inability to sequence ideas. Problems with grammar and sentence mechanics may be evident (Matson, 1988). Disruptive behavior is often a symptom of a learning disability as the adult constantly faces a world of frustration.

3. Many students exhibit symptoms of disabilities, but it is the degree to which they are present which impacts the teaching process. Matson reports that GED adults who show discrepancies among skill areas, as well as irregular gaps in academic skills, may suffer from the following deficits:

- Poor organization of concepts and tasks; problems with:
  - —prioritizing information and sequencing tasks
  - —relating a part to the whole
  - —grasping similarities
  - —grouping or categorizing
- Memory difficulties:
  - —long-term and short-term memory difficulties
  - —variable or unpredictable performance
- Processing difficulties:
  - —visual difficulties in sequencing memory and perception
  - —auditory difficulties in following directions, main idea, sequencing, processing, memory
  - —perceptual-motor difficulties

Once the learning-disabled student is identified, his needs should be addressed by the teacher or tutor working with him.

4. Many adults in local literacy programs exhibit the profile of an adult with the learning disability called Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or, in some cases, the more complex Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The adult who falls into this category had ADD/ADHD as a child but retains residual effects, even though the

symptoms may be somewhat ameliorated.

The adult may exhibit:

- Inattention
  - —fails to finish what he starts; often doesn't seem to listen; is easily distracted; has difficulty concentrating on tasks requiring sustained attention.
- Impulsiveness
  - —acts before thinking; shifts excessively from one activity to another; has difficulty organizing work; needs a lot of supervision
- Hyperactivity
  - —exhibits distractibility; gets out of seat frequently to move around the room; has random or patterned physical motion like foot tapping; exhibits nervousness; is impatient with sedentary activities (Wender, 1967).

5. Wender describes this type of student as one who has difficulty with self-control. He tends to act first and think later. He is likely to do things on the spur of the moment, later regretting his actions. He may interrupt others in class and does not anticipate the consequences of his actions.

This type of student may experience frequent mood swings and become readily depressed when encountering frustration. The ADD adult may have a short temper which affects his relationship with the teacher and with other students. He may overreact to events (Wender, 1988).

6. Working with an adult with significant learning disabilities presents a challenge. A trained specialist in learning disabilities stands the greatest chance for success. Since most literacy programs do not have an LD staff member, the important role of the regular teacher or tutor is to recognize the student's limitations. Methods and materials may need to be modified and expectations may need to be more realistic.

Depending on the type and severity of the disability, the learner may be either high, moderate, or low functioning.

Few literacy researchers have addressed the problem of the low-level LD student. Meyer and Keefe (1990) classify the LD adult beginning reader as one type of "Profile One Learner." (Other types of disabled learners may be classified likewise.) They report that this individual may consistently attend class but will progress very slowly, if at all. Such students enter literacy programs with little sight vocabulary, and their independent and instructional levels are at or below first grade. Listening capacity is also low, as is level of background knowledge. Tutors of Profile One students become frustrated and may blame themselves for the lack of progress.

Articulation and understanding of realistic goals by both the tutor and the adult is important. Goals should focus on the most simple coping skills. Teachers must plan lessons so that the student can succeed, and the instruction should center around functional literacy and numeracy skills of immediate importance to the learner.

Betty tutors in the library of a small town. She is currently working with a 28-year-old man, Curt, who is learning disabled. Her student attended special-education classes before dropping out of school. Although she is not specifically trained in working with the learning disabled, Betty carefully helps her student set realistic goals and tries a variety of different teaching approaches. She makes sure that the session ends with a successful experience. Her student seems to be growing more confident in functional literacy tasks, comes to each class faithfully, and is very positive about his ability to make progress.

She recently got in touch with the local community college and spoke to the learning-disabilities specialist about different techniques she can try with Curt. Betty is eager to try these techniques because she feels that Curt's small victories are "victories for the both of us."

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the learning-disabled student and provide instruction in the areas in which there is the greatest chance for success.

2. Provide consistent structure for this student. Help him to organize, to sequence his activities, and to keep his place on the page. Encourage him to use lists, markers, outlines, highlighters, and other aids to help him master a task or focus on an assignment.

3. Include a great deal of review for the student with memory difficulties. Always use hands-on, real-life materials. Suggest tactile and kinesthetic interaction as much as possible. Have the student draw representations of the concepts. Physically "do" the activity, if appropriate.

4. Explore specialized techniques like the Fernald Method (VAKT) and compensatory learning strategies with a learning-disabilities specialist.

5. Relate new concepts to those which have been mastered.

6. For the hyperactive or distractible adult, divide lessons into small segments which can be quickly mastered. Involve

physical activity in the lesson. Change activities frequently and provide breaks involving physical movement if necessary.

7. With the Profile One reader focus on very simple tasks involving functional skills. Guarantee success in each lesson.

TO CONSIDER

1. In your opinion, what is the impact of childhood hyperactivity on some adults who have low reading skills?

2. What percentage of our adult literacy students do you believe have learning disabilities? What types of learning disabilities have you encountered in your teaching?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 5, Secs. E and F.
- Read Susan Matson's "The GED and Learning Disabled Students" (1988) in the *Newsletter of the GED Testing Service*, Vol. 5, Washington, DC.
- Read Paul Wender, *The Hyperactive Child, Adolescent and Adult* (1987).

YOUR VOICE

1. Pretend that you are an administrator of a large literacy program. Knowing that dealing with a learning-disabled student presents one of the biggest challenges facing any program:
   - Into what instructional program will you most likely place an LD adult: a one-to-one volunteer tutoring situation, a class with an experienced teacher, a mix, or some other situation?
   - What materials and methods will you suggest for the student?
   - What type of training will you plan to help the tutor and/or teacher to assist the student in learning to read?
   - What kinds of support services are available to your students? (Consider the complexity of an ADHD adult who may need psychotherapy and medication concurrently to set the scene for educational interventions.)
2. In your ABE class, one member of the class seems to have an Attention Deficit Disorder.
   - How would you handle his hyperactivity and impulsivity, and still meet his needs and those of the other class members?

KEY #16

ADULT APPROACHES

Traditional approaches for children must be modified for adults.

THE DEBATE CONTINUES REGARDING THE similarities and differences between adult reading and juvenile reading. But certain considerations are certainly important when designing programs for adult readers.

Ellen panicked in a group lesson when she was called on to read in class. When asked what advice she would give literacy teachers, she said, "Do *not* put an adult on the spot to read in class. I am really scared to read in front of a group. I even write about this fear in my journal. I talk to my teacher about it. I freeze up and won't do it. I can't do it."

EXPLANATION

1. Each student must be respected as an adult who is capable of learning and growing. Amy Rose writes in *Adult Learning* that adult education should replace what is wrong with traditional public-school education. Therefore, she says, "The process should be more open, involving discussion, group planning of content, structure, and projected outcomes, and more experience-based in terms of general approach and actual learning process" (Rose, 1994).

The maturity and experience of the adult learner should allow for a depth of dialogue which is not possible with children. Each instructor should strive to be a partner who is helping the student in the learning process, not a superior who is calling the shots.

2. It is obvious that adult students have many more responsibilities and much less classroom time available than children who are full-time students. Many adults not only have limited time for study; they are also limited by poor organizational skills. They do not know how to begin to work on an assignment and they have difficulty estimating the time which a task will involve. In discussing time planning, the instructor might help the student to make a list of activities, prioritize them, and stick to a schedule to complete a sequence of events. Murk (1993) emphasizes that students should be allowed enough time to process information and that review and reflection strategies are important for bringing closure to learning sessions.

3. It has been stated that many adult learners have failed in previous school settings because a formal language is used which is not their own. Purcell-Gates (1993) relates how an urban Appalachian woman who could not read or write progressed to functional levels when she was able to read and write in her own dialect. The author states that "... educators who failed to acknowledge her language as an integral aspect of her as a learner and as a cultural being may have denied her previous access to literacy." Adults in a phonics-based program have a great deal of difficulty trying to sound out words which differ from the language they speak. They need to be allowed to create text in the dialect which they speak every day.

4. Adults generally come into contact with more community agencies and institutions than school children. Instructors can help students improve their coping skills and explore the richness of their surroundings. Writing in *Educational Leadership*, Tchudi and Lafer (1993) believe that a vital interdisciplinary curriculum can be developed in any geographic area because "... *every* region or locality has historical, scientific, economic, literacy, and cultural resources that can provide a starting point for explorations across the disciplines." The hometown is

Michael observed a class in the county prison. The teacher had distributed a newspaper for beginning readers and was going around the room asking each student to read out loud. It was reminiscent of a typical elementary school "reading group" where the teacher went around the circle, calling on the children consecutively to take turns reading orally.

What Michael immediately noticed was a feeling of tension. Some of the students were very reluctant to take a turn. They were shy about participating and uncomfortable about making mistakes in front of others in the group. Some students were visibly embarrassed when they could not sound out a word. This was clearly not an appropriate method to use with this group.

where our students interact on a daily basis, so it is a logical place to study. Deeper understandings of their communities can help adult students to function more effectively, and serve as a basis for expanding their horizons.

5. R. Baird Shuman (1989) writes in the *Journal of Reading* about his assumptions, misinformation, and experiences when first teaching adults to read. He talks about the mistake of asking his readers to read aloud in class. He recommends that if oral reading takes place in a group, the teacher should do the reading, or ask for volunteers who are comfortable reading aloud. He talks about the embarrassment of his adult students whose reading problems were evident to the whole group when they read out loud.

6. Instructors should avoid lecturing at all costs and attempt to involve students in active learning. Many educators encourage a writing workshop in which students do not follow a series of assignments; rather, they work collaboratively, helping each other and learning from fellow students. McAndrew (1993) states: "Teachers have to prepare themselves for the new time of workshop classrooms, thinking of it not as chaos but rather the time of active literacy, not as time that is marked off, but time that is lived in."

Shuman also noted that his students often dozed in class after having worked long shifts. He recommended activities in which adult readers have the opportunity to walk around the room or move frequently from one task to another.

7. According to Boraks and Richardson (1981), appropriate instructional principles based on adult readers' psychosocial behavior and needs can be designed. They suggest the following:

- Initial reading instruction may be best presented with materials in which adults have shown a utilitarian interest.
- Teachers should help adults manage their time for maximum reading time within the instructional hours.
- Adults who are learning to read should be taught using concrete topics.

Peter Murk (1993) emphasizes the concern for the anxiety of the adult student by making the classroom a safe and nonthreatening environment. He notes the importance of having the instructor get to know the student as an individual and respecting the differences among learners.

8. Do adults who come to reading classes have a positive attitude toward school? Shuman (1989) found this to be true of only half. There was a sizable group for whom any element which imitated a school setting, or school materials, put up a barrier to learning. Positive attitudes can be built by providing descriptive feedback following each effort. Murk (1993) emphasizes that reinforcement must be given for all accomplishments, all learning, and all growth.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Treat your students as adults and work with them as partners in learning.

2. Consider the time demands of the adult student and make the most constructive use of class periods. Keep homework demands reasonable.

3. Respect the student's spoken language and immediate environment.

4. Avoid putting any adult on the spot in front of others unless she has volunteered to take center stage.

5. Adults have two genuine literacy needs. The first is functional: in every session, teach the student topics which are of immediate use to her. The second is to a need to enjoy reading, which the insructor can help to foster. (See Key #17.)

6. Build positive attitudes toward lifelong learning.

TO CONSIDER

1. Research supports the contention that adult students should not be put on the spot to read orally; they should read out loud only if they have volunteered to do so. What other "traditional" elementary-school methods should not be used with adults? Why?

2. Adults have much greater demands on their time than children do. Discuss meth-

ods which you might use to maximize use of your adult students' class time and homework applications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 4, Sec. E.
- Read "A Comparison of Two Approaches for Teaching Reading to Adults," by Charles Norman and Grace Malicky (1984) in *Adult Literacy and Basic Education.*
- Read "Tested techniques for teaching adults," by Peter Murk in *Adult Learning,* 36:6, p.26.

YOUR VOICE

Let's go back to the basics: what are the differences between the way children and adults learn to read? Finish these statements:

- A child learns to read primarily by ...
- An adult learns to read primarily by ...

Now, look at the contrasts and see if you can think of techniques of teaching reading that are likely to succeed with an adult new reader.

KEY #17

PLEASURE READING

Reading develops as it becomes an everyday, enjoyable activity.

STUDENT VOICE

Tasha loves to read. She is working hard in her pre-GED texts while trying to make time for recreational reading. Describing her reading habits, Tasha says, "I like Danielle Steel and extra books like novels. I read for enjoyment to get away from my problems and to get into someone else's life. I'm sad when the book is finished, when I have to say good-bye to the character."

The teacher has noticed that Tasha *always* carries a paperback book to read at the bus stop, at lunch, and while waiting for appointments.

HOW CAN WE EXPECT ADULTS TO LEARN TO read fluently and effortlessly if they practice only during the one to three hours we see them?

Students must spend time reading on their own to develop fluency. Reading for enjoyment is important in developing literacy skills and emphasizing that reading is a life-long learning activity.

EXPLANATION

1. Writing in the *Journal of Reading*, Gwen Taylor (1993) states, "There are millions of people who have learned to read but choose not to, except minimally." She has tried to foster reading for enjoyment by allowing students to pick their own recreational reading from whatever genre they most prefer. The students are encouraged to read for pleasure only. Instead of writing formal book reports, they are asked to sit in a small group and have a book discussion. Each student merely tells about the book which was read, answering any questions generated by the others in the group. The students receive no grade or evaluation of this activity. Taylor has found that students benefit from hearing others tell what they have read for relaxation and enjoyment. The students are encouraged to read further, and they often read a book that has been recommended by a classmate. This is likely to be the first time some adults have had the opportunity to read only for pleasure.

2. A program in the Washington, DC, Public Library named "A Feel for Books" is a discussion group for adult readers at grade 2-6 reading levels. Sharon Morgenthaler (1993) explains how the program uses scholars and educators to facilitate discussion groups which focus on comparing characters from the stories with the experiences of the participants. This provides a vital link between the literature and the real lives of the students. Students are given time to go back to the text to find the lines being discussed and to reflect on what they have read. The moderator's role is to ask questions and clarify group members' comments, letting the students dominate the conversation.

3. Most of the materials published in the literacy area focus on two skill areas: phonics and functional literacy. Unfortunately, for the adult reader, phonics reading instruction may be lacking in excitement, and functional-literacy materials such as want ads and job applications may be important but will probably not emotionally engage the reader in the reading act. According to Rigg and Kazemek (1986), "These materials narrow rather than enlarge a student's view of literacy; and the snippets of language they display are almost always bereft of verve or grace."

Heathington and Koskinen (1982) recommend that literacy administrators have students fill out interest inventories and send them to publishers because some published materials are inappropriate for our adult learners. Passages need to kindle the excitement and meaningfulness which are so often missing from published materials.

The growing body of fiction and other pleasure reading written expressly for adult new readers provides an important alternative. In these controlled-reading-level materials adults can read about characters and situations to which they can relate, gaining reading experience in the process. Several publishers of adult education materials offer such books.

4. Some educators believe that much too much time is spent on reading that is geared to remediating student deficiencies, not to enhancing their strengths. William Bintz (1993) feels that in order to do that, we need to value and legitimate what students are currently reading out of school. Furthermore, we need to respect the student's interests and encourage in-depth reading in those areas.

Many new readers conscientiously decode each word, but they will progress very slowly unless they are given *intensive* and *frequent* opportunities to *practice* their skill. Motivation for reading plays a key role in fostering independent practice in reading skills. Yet few literacy programs attempt to determine the most interesting material for their students and build instruction around them. Students should be helped to identify their areas of strength and encouraged to read widely for pleasure.

5. Strategies to encourage fluency and speed are generally not suggested for adult new readers. Yet new readers, almost universally, spend a disproportionate amount of time on print-based cues, forgetting to comprehend throughout the passage. They read so slowly that "they lose track of meaning. Reading too slowly actually interferes with comprehension because it overloads the visual system and memory" (Bacon, 1983, p.5). Adults who learn to focus on meaning and use prior background knowledge and context clues will progress at far greater speed than those who concentrate on phonic analysis. (See Keys #5, #8, and #10 for background information.)

For the most part, beginning adult readers do not find reading an interesting pursuit and may have negative attitudes toward reading. The words *reading* and *enjoyment* do not "go together." But we do know that when reading is concrete, high in emotional content, and personal, students read faster and at higher instructional levels than would be expected.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Encourage the adult to read anything he can get his hands on.

2. Allow opportunities for students to tell others about what they have read for enjoyment.

3. Keep a portable library of high-interest magazines and books for the adult to borrow for an indefinite length of time. Involve community groups, such as Scout troops, in collecting books for your literacy program.

4. If you are using phonics workbooks or functional reading materials, be sure to introduce books to be read "just for fun." Books about hobbies, crafts, sports, and cooking often have many pictures and can be perused casually.

5. During the first interview with each student, administer a reading-interest inventory or at least compile a list of interests for the adult. Give that information to the tutor or teacher to guide the selection of materials for literacy instruction.

6. Read aloud to your students! Many adult beginning readers enjoy listening to stories, for this is a quiet, relaxing time when the teacher does the work. This also motivates the student to learn to read the material himself. As you are reading to the student, tape-record the story and give the tape to the student for later enjoyment along with a print copy of the story.

TO CONSIDER

1. Do you believe that the stories in the published literacy materials you use truly engage the reader and motivate him to want to read more? Why or why not?

2. Why do many adult students have negative attitudes toward reading? Name

The ABE instructor describes her student as a hard worker who is making very positive attitudinal changes. Pedro is an 18-year-old who dropped out of school in ninth grade because of family problems. He recently got a job painting the home of a retired teacher. This woman took a personal interest in Pedro and gave him sports magazines to read "just for fun." Reading had always been "work" for Charles, and he associated it with his negative experiences at school. But he became so interested through his recreational reading that he decided to go back to school.

Pedro was amazed that the ABE class was multifaceted, that part of the time was devoted to a regular textbook curriculum, while a portion of each class was reserved for free reading. Reading in his areas of interest has been an enjoyable experience for Pedro.

some ways in which you might help your students develop more positive approaches to reading.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 4, Sec. E.
- Use Heathington and Koskinen's "Interest Inventory for Adult Beginning Readers," *Journal of Reading* (1982) or make your own.
- Refer to bibliographies such as the *Reader Development Bibliography of the Free Library of Philadelphia* and *Books for Adult New Readers, A Bibliography Developed by Project: LEARN*, as well as *Book Discussion Clubs for Adult New Readers* and *Opening Doors for Adult New Readers*, all available through New Readers Press and other sources.

YOUR VOICE

When asked what it takes to become a really good reader, one GED student replied: "You have to *read, read, read* ... Read *anything* you can get your hands on!"

This student knew that reading skill improves with use. It is through such practice that one acquires genuine fluency and speed.

- What questions would you ask to determine your adult student's areas of interest?
- List some of the activities which you would devise to encourage reading for enjoyment in your student's high interest areas.
- Discuss with another teacher or tutor several nontraditional "textbooks" that can be used with adult-literacy and ABE students.

KEY #18

TEACHER AND TUTOR

The student-instructor relationship is a focal point in learning.

STUDENT VOICE

Adult students who were interviewed identified these aspects of a good teacher:

- **"builds your ego and makes you feel good"**
- **"is nice and relaxed in class"**
- **"is someone you can trust"**
- **"takes time with you when you get stuck"**
- **"listens to your questions no matter how dumb they are"**
- **"is happy and funny, has a good sense of humor"**
- **"cares about you and is sensitive to your feelings"**
- **"lets you work at your own pace and at your own level"**
- **"treats you like an equal"**
- **"has lots of patience"**

TEACHERS ARE ON THE FRONT LINE EACH day and are the daily support to adults who may be facing formidable barriers to education and difficult problems in their personal lives.

Teachers who are flexible and can adapt quickly to the changing needs of their adult learners, teachers who sympathetically respond to adult personal concerns but are not bogged down by them, and teachers who organize instruction around student goals and remain task oriented are the most successful with adult literacy and basic education students.

EXPLANATION

1. Above all else, the effective adult literacy instructor is sensitive to the individual needs of each student. The good teacher senses all of the variables which affect the student both inside and outside of class. It is imperative to establish a safe environment in which the student and teacher can establish a trusting relationship. Since most literacy programs do not offer professional counseling, teachers serve on the front line to listen, share, and help with problem solving. Crandall et al. (1984) note that the focus may be personal, medical, academic, or work related. They emphasize the importance of counseling because: "Some practitioners believe that learning cannot take place until the overload of life problems and some of the resulting psychological blocks to learning are addressed."

Since most literacy students are disadvantaged adults, who bring serious problems to the classroom, counseling plays an important role in the educational process.

2. Most teachers have neither the time nor the expertise for in-depth counseling of troubled students, yet the needs of our diverse student populations continue to grow. Therefore, teachers must often serve as a source of referral to other social service agencies. Instructors must consider how much time can be allotted to focus on personal concerns, and how much responsibility they should accept, for students will confide in their teachers about problems such as drugs, alcohol, and abusive relationships. It is incumbent upon the instructor to be aware of the human-service agencies which are equipped to deal with these problems. Writing in *The Pennsylvania ABLE Staff Handbook*, Wegener (1992) states: "The two most important things instructors should keep in mind are to be willing to listen to students and be knowledgeable enough of local resources to make an appropriate referral when necessary."

Having a county service directory available is a must, and knowing when to use it is vitally important.

3. Reading teachers and tutors have a strong influence on the strategies the adult eventually learns in discovering how to read:

- Students learn reading strategies from *how* teachers teach, not from what they teach. For example, if the teachers are focusing on phonics, yet they themselves are using context clues to try to help the student under-

stand the meaning of a word, the student will use context also.

- Often, the teacher did not provide enough practice time on the skill and so the skill instruction was lost.
- When teachers and tutors asked what the learners wanted, and especially *how* they wanted to learn it, and followed that with responsive instruction, then students stayed in programs longer and learned more.
- Students need assistance in knowing *what* to attend to and what learning strategies are best in different learning situations. Teachers who help students to organize their attention were the most successful.
- Teachers who model the lesson that is being taught will have more successful learners. For instance, if the sound of *ch* is being taught and the teacher encounters a new word, sounds out the *ch* sound, and then guesses at the word much like a good learner, then the student will be more likely to learn the concept. The teaching method of modeling cannot be overestimated.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Your expectations for your student may have an impact on how well she actually progresses. Remember to think positively and set attainable goals.

2. Teachers need to be cognizant of the important role they play in some students' lives. The teacher can significantly affect the self-esteem of the adult learner by focusing on strengths and by noting each increment of progress, no matter how small.

3. Seek opportunities for professional counseling for students who need such support.

4. Give your student the gift of time. She may have been pushed through school without ever having mastered a skill. Be patient and let her progress at the pace which best suits her needs.

TO CONSIDER

1. Agree or disagree: The relationship with the tutor or teacher is the single most important factor in the success and retention of the adult literacy learner.

2. One student said in an interview, "A good teacher treats you like an equal." What does that mean in terms of instructional practice? How can this equality be achieved?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 1, Secs. A and C, and Chap. 5, Secs. B, C, and D.
- Read the section on Counseling in Chapter 3 of David Crandall's *Guidebook for Effective Literacy Practice* (1984) for a practical approach to the counseling aspect of adult literacy.

TEACHER VOICE

Tam entered the life-skills and literacy class when she was 50 years old. A native of Vietnam, she had never attended school, but now that her daughter had left home she was eager to learn to read.

The coordinator matched her with a tutor who was a retired college teacher. Tam says, "From the very first day, he treated me like a family member." As the coordinator observed, Jack went out of his way to praise Tam and to show her how she was progressing, no matter how slowly. Each week, Tam would cook some Vietnamese food for Jack to take home to his family. Tam works hard to please Jack but also to gain independence in her new life.

YOUR VOICE

There is always the dilemma in literacy classes:

- To what extent should the teacher take the role of counselor to troubled students?
- What is your personal philosophy of the role of counseling in the teaching/tutoring situation?

KEY #19

INDEPENDENCE

Long-term reading advancement requires a self-directed learner.

STUDENT VOICE

Ramona had progressed from basic literacy to an ABE class. She said, "I like working by myself in class. I can do it now without being distracted by the other guys. When I first started class, I needed a lot of help. I like to work alone at home. I used to be frustrated by how much I didn't know, but now I know I can do it. I want as much independence as possible."

Carol was finally on her way to getting her GED. But all was not happy. "My boyfriend doesn't want me to come to class. He thinks I'm getting too good for myself."

ADULT READERS ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST adult learners and secondarily beginning readers. As adult learners, the students with whom we work perform best when taking independent initiative in learning to read. It is the greatest myth in literacy education that the teacher or tutor teaches the adult learner to read. Rather, it is the adult himself who learns to read; we are mere facilitators.

The other side of the coin is that literacy itself is a liberating activity which alters the comfortable social and psychological context of the learner and that independence may not be beneficial to the adult immediately but may cause some personal disequilibrium and pain.

EXPLANATION

1. Researchers in adult learning often point to the self-direction of adult learners. Some (such as Knowles and Brookfield) believe that adults benefit from maximum participation in planning their educational agenda. It is normal in the process of maturation to move from dependence to managerial control of one's life. The adult also brings to the situation years of valuable life experiences which may help him solve educational problems. The study of how adults learn has been referred to as *andragogy*, a field of study quite different from pedagogy (for children).

2. It has been suggested by literacy practitioners that some of our literacy-seeking adults fit more of the pedagogical mode of education. While a few literacy students take charge of their own learning, more seem to have acquired a passive role in their approach to the teacher and learning. Brookfield (1986) suggests that some adults may not be self-directing, and that the reaction to a lot of independence in the learning situation may be anxiety, resistance, confusion, and anger, especially among non-middle-class groups. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) second the opinion and add that self-direction should be the goal and target of all adult education programs but that adults do not necessarily bring that independence with them at the start. Adults need to forget prior educational experiences which fostered dependence and conformity. They can no longer sit in the back of the room and expect to learn. Adults need to be made aware of their power as learners, their ability to teach themselves, and the necessity for taking an active and intensive role in their own education.

3. Literacy researchers have attempted to describe the feelings that low-level literates have toward education and reading. Eberle and Robinson (1980) interviewed adults who could not read and found two prevailing attitudes: that anyone who has not learned to read before adulthood is a "dummy" and that if you can't read and write, you are probably incompetent in other areas as well. The adults resented their dependency on others and harbored feelings of inadequacy in raising their children. Many of the adults interviewed covered up poor reading skills.

Thistlewaite (1983) cites the lack of goals as a major obstacle in learning to read. If the adult has no clear and persistent reason to learn to read, progress will be slow and erratic. Strong goal orientation can overcome the fears, insecurities, and grueling work it takes to learn to read.

4. *Adult literacy programs do not always foster independence.* Kazemek (1988) decries the approach to adult literacy which is often child-like. He cites the use of workbooks published by the major companies which are virtually indistinguishable from children's texts. He believes that adult literacy programs are still teacher controlled, using didactic methods and materials which are similar in approach to any elementary basal series. According to Kazemek, even when voice is given to adult self-direction and empowerment, child-like materials, standardized tests, and grade levels foster the notion of the "illiterate others."

5. Paolo Friere, a Brazilian educator, focused on adult literacy as a dialogue between teacher and learner by which each had learning to gain from the other, and whose roles were exchanged depending on the context. There needs to be a realignment of power wherein neither the teacher nor the student is the sole possessor of knowledge. Through the dialogic nature of the curriculum (in which the content of the lesson is negotiated by the learner) the learner moves toward independence, liberation, and empowerment in society.

6. Fingeret defines literacy in the context of the social network. She argues that "illiterate adults should be seen as members of oral subcultures, with their own set of values and beliefs, rather than as failing members of the dominant literate culture" (1984). Within that culture, distinct types of knowledge are valued (such as common sense) which are unrelated to literacy skills. The recognition that the adult learner has skills that the tutor/teacher would do well to possess is an important element in the classroom or tutoring session.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. End each lesson by asking the adult learner what he would like to learn in the next lesson.

2. Instigate shared learning experiences in which the adult learner has an opportunity to switch sides and teach you a skill he feels confident about.

3. Encourage independent learning outside the classroom. Ask the adult learner to describe ways he might practice the literacy skill taught in the time between formal sessions. Suggest opportunities for literacy advancement which move the adult toward independence in learning to read.

4. Discuss frequently the goal that brought the adult to return to education. Focus on that goal.

5. Foster educational practices which are quite different from those used in elementary and secondary schools. Explore new ways of learning information. (See Key #17.)

TO CONSIDER

1. In your opinion, do more adult students possess a "take charge" attitude in ABE classes or are more of your students passive in their control of the learning situation?

2. Think about the psychological profile of the adult beginning reader. Respond to Eberle and Robinson's finding that adults who cannot read consider themselves stupid and incompetent in other areas as well. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 5, Secs. B, C, and D.
- Read "Necessary Changes: Professional Involvement in Adult Literacy Programs," by Francis Kazemek in *Harvard Educational Review*, 1988.
- Read *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning* by Stephen Brookfield.

YOUR VOICE

Many programs of adult literacy are similar to elementary school curricula. They present teacher-controlled classes where students have little input. Workbooks and textbooks resemble the basal reading series produced for children.

- Brainstorm a list of ways in which you can help your student gain control of his own learning. Include specific steps which could be followed to help him to achieve independence.
- Think about the materials you are using in your literacy classes. Would you say that they foster independence? In what ways do they lead toward independence and in what ways do they fall short?
- If a clear and strong goal orientation is considered a strong motivating factor for an adult to stay in a literacy program, how can a teacher ensure that the goal orientation is paramount in the mind of the student?

When I first worked with Ginny, I recognized how frustrated she was from years of depending on others. She had strong ties with relatives who had moved cross-country. Ginny was unable to afford a telephone, so her communication was limited to cards and letters. While she still lived at home, Ginny's daughter had written the letters and read the replies to her mother. Now that her daughter was married, Ginny had to depend on a neighbor to help with the correspondence.

Ginny came to class because she desperately wanted to be able to write her own letters and read her mail. She wanted the freedom to correspond whenever she wanted to ... not when someone was available to help her. And, she longed for the privacy of reading what she received without assistance from others.

KEY #20

FAMILY LITERACY

Extending reading to a student's family provides a wealth of benefits.

STUDENT VOICE

When the family literacy class began, Marlene was very concerned that her three-year-old son Eric was so quiet. He spoke infrequently, using very short sentencess. Marlene wanted to know how to get him to talk more. Her teacher gave her some very simple books on colors to share with her son at home. Once Eric learned the colors in the books, Marlene was encouraged to have her son identify colors of items around the house, then in the neighborhood, and then at the store. Now, Eric not only tells the colors of everything he sees but is starting to learn about shapes. He is naming things in his surroundings, and he chatters constantly when he and his mother ride the bus.

FAMILY LITERACY PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES for children, reading instruction for adults, and modeling of constructive parenting skills. It is the ideal setting for helping both generations, fostering positive attitudes toward learning, and helping the whole family to grow.

EXPLANATION

1. In September 1989, President Bush collaborated with the Association of Governors to develop "America 2000," a statement which defines six performance goals for education. Family literacy programs address two of these goals:

Goal #1: All American children will start school ready to learn.

Goal #5: Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Oliva, 1992, p.192).

Since that time, a number of programs have been developed to educate children and parents simultaneously in programs of family literacy. In defining this concept, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education Richard W. Riley (1993) wrote that "Family literacy aims to break the cycle of intergenerational illiteracy by bringing parents and their children together for learning activities."

2. One model program is the Pennsylvania Even Start Family Literacy Program, which integrates early childhood education and adult education into a unified program. The Pennsylvania Department of Education Fact Sheet (1993) defines Even Start's three major goals:

- To help parents become full partners in the education of their children;
- To assist children in reaching their full potential as learners; and
- To provide literacy training for their parents.

The participants in this program are parents who are eligible for adult education under the Adult Education Act and their children, ages 0-7, who reside in an elementary school attendance area which participates in the basic Chapter 1 program. It is required that at least one parent and one child from each family participate together in Even Start. Proponents of this program feel that it is resulting in a more holistic view of learning which builds on the broad family context.

3. In *Twenty Lives Nineteen Years Later: A Longitudinal Study of the Impact of Literacy*, Anabel Newman (1985) found that among a group of readers who exhibited low readiness in the first grade, the variables of role models, motivation, interest, perseverance, and pressure all had important effects on achievement in the occupations and education of these readers who might be expected to fail. Family pressure, negative or positive, is singled out as crucial. Lack of support and conflict in the home cause children to suffer educationally, while positive parental attitudes and encouragement to achieve can benefit the child.

A teacher in a family literacy program relates the story of Ricardo, who, after failing the CDL exam required to continue his job as a truck driver, became very depressed about his future. He desperately needed employment to support his family, and he wanted a better life for his children. Ricardo and his son Pablo began attending this teacher's family literacy class at a local agency. Here, parents improve their reading skills while children experience reading readiness activities, and the families are taught how to interact in positive ways. Ricardo became so involved in the program that now he even volunteers to help with maintenance chores at the center. Pablo shows an avid interest in books about trucks and cars and asks his dad to read to him each night at home. Father and son are making good progress while developing mutually positive attitudes about learning.

4. From the lives of many of our literacy students emerges a profile of the adult learner. These individuals are likely to have been placed in the lowest reading groups in their childhood classrooms. As a result, they have experienced pain and belittlement in their reading lives. Childhood abuse, both physical and emotional, was reported by every respondent in one author's small survey (Rosow, 1988). Adults who are in literacy programs have little recollection of ever having been read to as children. There is a sense of powerlessness among readers who do not know why it is so difficult for them to understand print when it is easy for so many others.

Reading to young children helps to build positive attitudes toward learning while enhancing listening skills and expanding vocabulary. Good readiness skills set the stage for effective learning in the elementary grades and beyond.

5. One often cited reason for adults to enter literacy programs is the desire to help their children. Many adults are afraid that their children will ask them to read notices from school, help them with homework, or write a note to the teacher. Family literacy programs help to provide adults with basic skills while modeling good parenting skills and giving the parent opportunities to interact with their children in an academic environment. Effective parents monitor homework, are interested in school activities, and are involved with their children as growing readers.

6. Fathers have an important role to play in their children's literacy attainment. Only one out of the ten programs highlighted in *First Teachers* (Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy) mentions the role of the father in the issue of family literacy, and it refers to him only in a supporting, rather than a leading, role. Most family literacy programs focus on the mother's role as primary caretaker and also as teacher. Some programs refer to "parents" but serve only women and do not address the specific needs of the low-literate father. Some existing programs avoid distinguishing between the mother's and father's roles in the literacy process.

- Reading research states the importance of the father's influence on his children's attitudes and education. When a father reads to his son, the son's reading achievement level in early elementary school is superior to the son whose mother reads to him (Laosa, 1982).
- In observations of storytelling to young children by teacher, mother, and father, styles of telling differed significantly. While the mother and teacher took a "sober, educative" stance, the father took a more authoritarian role but also allowed for more emotional response. The father also allowed more "nonsense" responses to the story (Taylor, 1983).
- There is also evidence that the content of boys' reading becomes "more male" in fourth grade and evolves into a "male literacy" in which mother is excluded. An involved father can capitalize on this interest (O'Rourke, 1979).

7. Research suggests that the amount of reading a young child does outside of school and in the home is consistently related to reading achievement. Yet, most children read very little outside of school. In a study of fifth graders noted in *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, 50% of the children read books for an average of four minutes per day or less, 30% for two minutes a day or less, and 10% never read any book at all. For most children, reading activity occupied less than 1% of free time while TV occupied about 33% (National Academy of Education, 1985). In homes where reading is not a valued activity by the parents, the reading achievement of the kids also suffers.

The best preparation for children's reading is oral reading in the home. Reading aloud to children, asking questions about the content, beginning introduction to letter-sound association, and relating the book to real-life events is essential to getting a preschooler ready for kindergarten. Adults who cannot read are unable to support these

activities at home.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

1. Be concerned with the literacy of the entire family when working with the adult or the child. Model good parenting skills and help parents to interact with their children in positive ways. Plan literacy activities which can be shared both in the classroom setting and at home.

2. Praise the child in front of the parent, and compliment the parent in front of the child. Invite other members of the family to your program for literacy or other educational events. Help the parent and child to write letters send greeting cards to members of the extended family.

4. Be sure to praise both the parent and the child as individuals and to respect their separate interests and strengths.

TO CONSIDER

1. Regarding interventions for at-risk children, Robert Slavin (1993) states that both child-centered and family-centered interventions can make a substantial difference in cognitive development. What types of settings would you provide for infants and toddlers in a family literacy program? How would you like to see these parents interact with their children?

2. Imagine a family literacy class, in which some of the parents have spouses who do not want them to come back to school. What can you do for the family in which one parent wants to learn and the other does not?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to Sourcebook, Chap. 5, Sec. I.
- Read *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (1985) published by the National Academy of Education.

YOUR VOICE

Your center receives a call from Julie. She has just seen a TV program about parents who cannot read, and she wants to sign up for literacy classes. At the same time, she expresses concern for her two preschool-aged children and wants to know what she can do to help them to get a better start as learners.

- What specific suggestions do you have for Julie?
- What materials do you think she should provide for her children?
- How can Julie create a "climate of literacy" in the home on her very tightly limited budget?

SOURCEBOOK

A survey of the literature on adult reading

59

CHAPTER 1 LITERACY TRAINING MODELS

A. TRAINING AND MOTIVATION OF TUTORS AND TEACHERS

A review of the literature pertaining to tutor training indicates that the most successful programs are those which have been carefully planned in advance. Administrators need to ascertain exactly what they want tutors to do before recruiting them. Clear objectives and job descriptions need to be established. *Kansas Volunteer Utilization: Training of Resources*, developed by the Kansas State Department of Education (1985) contains volunteer-recruitment objectives. The book suggests that the sponsoring agency should target the number and types of volunteers it is seeking. It should decide what kind of training will be provided, who will provide the training and who will supervise the tutors. The program must provide constructive and potentially rewarding tasks for the instructional staff, and it should plan for inservice and evaluation.

Volunteering provides an opportunity for people to use specific knowledge or skills which they already possess. Furthermore, it is a vehicle for learning new skills. Helping others adds meaning and significance to the volunteer's life, enabling her to feel useful and needed. *Kansas Volunteer Utilization* suggests a format for interviewing potential trainees in which the goals of the tutor are discussed in light of the literacy program in which she would participate. It also contains an interest and hobby checklist which is used to determine areas in which the tutor may contribute to the program. A Volunteer Viewpoint list emphasizes the need for program administrators to consider their responsibility to train and support tutors so that their teaching experiences may be challenging and rewarding. This article cautions administrators against signing up volunteers to meet quotas when certain persons are not suited for particular jobs.

Once tutors have been trained, administrators are encouraged to consider the interests of both tutor and student in matching them.

John Stauffer (1974) states that an underlying assumption of volunteer literacy education is that a beneficial social relationship often develops between tutors and students. He suggests exploring how student attitudes are modified by their participation in the volunteer educational experience. Administrators may observe whether these modifications affect reading progress or if they are more likely to impact the social aspects of the program.

Topping (1986) suggests that several issues be resolved prior to the tutor-student match. He recommends that both parties be clear about their commitments and that they clarify their expectations. He suggests that they consider drawing up a contract specifying an initial time span and minimum criteria for contacts. Topping feels that a clear, fixed-term arrangement is more likely to succeed than a loose arrangement. Such a contract could be modified as needs change.

Tutor-training materials contain numerous suggestions for implementing success-

ful interactions between teacher/tutor and adult student. For example, in her article, "You're the Coach," Martha Lane (1984) cites the following Dos and Don'ts:

1. Always be there and on time.
2. If a student doesn't show up, call or visit to find out why.
3. If possible, meet with each student at least twice a week, an hour and a half at a time.
4. Keep in touch with your student's teachers (if student is still in school).
5. Always work to meet a student's immediate needs and interest.
6. Never say no.
7. Never say, "Do you understand?" (A student will almost always say "yes" to please you, whether he really understands or not.)
8. From the time to time, you will make a mistake. Immediately say so, and correct yourself.
9. Keep a notebook of the words, sounds, sentence structures, etc. which trouble each student.
10. If a student seems bored, change your activity.
11. Allow each student to work as quickly and independently as possible.
12. Always go from the known to the unknown.
13. Be a good listener.
14. Treat personal matters confidentially.
15. Do not be afraid to experiment.

One of the most pervasive problems of adult education programs is poor attendance and poor retention of students in programs. The Lane article also contains an explanation of why some students drop out and what problems may be encountered in the tutoring experience. Tutors are encouraged to be sensitive to variables which may cause their students to stop attending, such as moving, personal or family problems, and health-related problems.

Encouragement is given to tutors in a section of *Kansas Volunteer Utilization* entitled "The Practices of a Good Listener." The tutor should listen to understand what the student means, not get ready to reply. He should attend to the speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions, and overall behavior. He needs to look for clues as to what the student is trying to say, accepting the student's feelings whether he shares them or not. The tutor should be patient, giving the student time to express his ideas. The good listener does not prepare an answer until the whole message has been conveyed. It is important to show interest and alertness. He does not interrupt. The good tutor looks for areas in which to agree and to offer support.

The *Laubach Tutor Handbook* (1989) presents a basic philosophy for tutors. While the primary goal is to help the student acquire basic literacy skills, rapport and patience are underlined as the two keys to success. Laubach emphasizes that tutoring should be a relaxed and friendly experience. The tutor should establish a good rapport by being honest, sincere, genial, and warm. She should recognize that learning may be slow and difficult at times. Care should be taken to point out the student's progress to him, and to praise him for his accomplishments, no matter how small they may be. Each session should be a rewarding experience for both tutor and student.

Dr. Laubach summarized his principles in the following piece about compassion in the *Tutor Handbook* (1989):

C Cut "no" out of your vocabulary.
O Observe what the new reader already knows; respect and build on this knowledge.
M Make certain you respect his time; begin and end promptly.
P Prepare your lessons carefully; confidence begets confidence.
A Allow the adult to progress at his own pace and to teach himself as much as possible.
S See that the learner gets honest praise and encouragement.
S Save unnecessary chatter until the end of the lesson.
I Introduce something new in every lesson.
O Offer friendship and understanding, but avoid patronizing.

N Notice and encourage ways in which the student can teach you.

Laubach elaborates a number of other general teaching principles before introducing the specific strategies and materials used in its program.

Tutors and teachers are trained in a variety of techniques, using a number of approaches. Training programs often involve lectures, workshops, videotapes, or slide presentations. They may include role-playing experiences in which potential tutors practice techniques in the training class. Tutors are familiarized with evaluation procedures and lesson planning. They are supplied with materials to use and suggestions for making each lesson a positive experience. Topping (1986) presents a dictionary of praise which gives tutors hints on responding to student attitudes, efforts, and skills. Most models present a number of ideas for enrichment activities.

B. AN OVERVIEW OF LITERACY MODELS

Illiteracy in the United States has been an ongoing problem throughout the past century. Foreign-born Americans needed to acquire functional literacy in their new language. By the 1920s, most states had laws requiring compulsory schooling to age 16. By 1927, 60% of the states had enacted adult education legislation (Audrey Thomas, LCW, 1984). Large numbers of illiterates were identified during the World War II, and the Army took responsibility for developing appropriate programs for enlisted personnel.

During the 1950s, most states passed laws concerning adult literacy, but there was no federal coordination of these efforts. In 1957, the Adult Education Association created a National Commission for Adult Literacy.

Concern for developing functional literacy increased in the 1960s. A minimum of eight years of schooling was now considered necessary to provide adequate skills. Since the national Right to Read program was funded in 1971, numerous projects have been funded to research needs and develop materials for teaching adults to read.

A complete treatment of the history of illiteracy in America is included in Wanda Cooks' *Adult Literacy Education in the U.S.* (1977).

In Pennsylvania, where *How Adults Read* was developed, the most frequently used models of literacy education today are Laubach Literacy Action (LLA) and Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA). The Volunteer Reading Aides of the Lutheran Church Women and the Center for Literacy (CFL) in Philadelphia have also developed tutor-training handbooks. Programs throughout the state are varied, and many use combinations of the basic models. This diversity allows organizations the freedom to meet the needs of specific populations and individuals.

While all the basic literacy models encourage the tutor to be aware of the adult students' special needs, some assumptions about the nature of the adult learner and the way the adult best learns to read underlie each. These assumptions are included in the descriptions that follow.

Laubach

In 1930, literacy pioneer Frank C. Laubach coined the phrase "Each one teach one" (Laubach, Kirk, and Laubach, 1981). While working in the Philippines, he developed a method of teaching adults to read and write in their native tongue. The method was later used to teach adults in over 300 languages. As an extension of his work, Laubach Literacy International (LLI) was formed in 1955. Ever since, volunteer tutors in the U.S. Laubach Literacy Action (LLA) are trained to use materials of the Laubach Way to Reading, a sequenced phonetic approach. It is a series designed for adults who are nonreaders or low-level readers. New Readers Press, LLI's publishing division, has produced five *Skill Books* and correlated materials designed to be used in sequence. Teacher's manuals give specific instructions and lesson plans to be used by literacy tutors.

The Laubach *Skill Books* present a carefully designed development of basic reading and writing skills. Each lesson includes the following elements: 1) vocabulary development, 2) phonic or structural analysis of words, 3) the reading of a short story, 4) comprehension checks, and 5) writing practice. The lessons present the sounds and regular spellings of the consonants, short vowels, and long vowels, as well as selected irregular spellings. They progress to include more difficult reading, writing, and grammatical skills (Laubach, 1981).

Skill Book 1 contains 13 lessons. Students are presented with a foundation of word-attack and comprehension skills. The alphabet is taught, and one sound is introduced for each letter. Picture-association charts are used to teach letters, key words, and sounds. The digraphs *ch*, *sh*, and *th* are taught. Capital letters are then associated with the lowercase letters. Each lesson has a story, and a correlated reader is introduced in Lesson 13. *Skill Book 1* includes 132 sight words and introduces blending of sounds, punctuation, silent reading, and simple comprehension skills. Each lesson includes a writing session which teaches letter formation. Dictation exercises, review sections, and homework exercises are also included.

Skill Book 2 focuses on the short vowel sounds. Some of the new vocabulary words begin with blends, and 192 new words are introduced. Lessons continue to feature key words and illustrations, and additional words are presented for each sound. This book also provides instruction in punctuation, comprehension, and structural analysis. Reading skills are reinforced by the writing section of each lesson, and spelling skills are developed.

Long vowel sounds are taught in *Skill Book 3*. They are presented in a chart format similar to the previous books. The sentences on this level are more complex and the stories are longer. Comprehension skills are developed with exercises involving summarizing, finding main ideas, recognizing implied meanings, predicting outcomes, and expressing opinions. Lessons include "Reading for Living" sections which present topics such as reading menus, letters, ads, and bills. The student is encouraged to complete written exercises in a separate notebook. Sections of extra stories are presented in "More Reading" chapters, and a correlated reader is introduced. In all, 399 words are taught in this book, and a cursive writing workbook may be used at this level.

Skill Book 4 teaches letter combinations *oo*, *ou*, *aw*, and *oi*. It has a format similar to that of *Skill Book 3*. Most lessons include functional literacy exercises, and there are more supplemental stories for review and independent reading. Comprehension skills include identifying cause-and-effect relationships, making inferences, and drawing conclusions. *Skill Book 4* contains exercises in reading cursive writing and in writing sentences.

Skill Book 5 focuses on sounds which are represented by more than one consonant symbol. It also covers words that do not follow regular spelling patterns and words containing consonant sounds that may be spelled in more than one way. This level presents exercises in letter writing and using the dictionary. Further comprehension skills include interpreting author opinions and evaluating personal reactions to what has been read. Instructions are given to increase reading speed.

There is a collection of stories and articles in the correlated readers at each level. These books allow the beginning reader to gain confidence from independent reading exercises. The readers are color-coded to their corresponding *Skill Books*. They are intended to stimulate students to seek other independent reading experiences.

The Laubach manual notes the importance of considering the characteristics of the adult learner when designing lessons, including: possible feelings of inferiority, possible family problems and responsibilities, physical weaknesses, and previous experiences of failure and success (Laubach, 1981). Laubach feels that an illiterate adult

should be treated like any other adult, and his self-respect should be maintained. The tutor should remember that an adult's lesson time is valuable, and that materials should be immediately useful. The student should be encouraged to teach himself whenever possible. Laubach strongly recommends that success be attained in every lesson.

Meyer and Keefe (1988) examined the Laubach method and materials in order to question the philosophy and methodology on which the Laubach program is based. They found that the Laubach method exemplifies a system which is essentially "bottom-up"—in which reading is a process of decoding of words through the recognition of the sounds the component letters make. Phonic regularities are integral to the method. Meyer and Keefe criticize this approach's ignorance of the adult learner's prior background experience, its focus on phonics as opposed to comprehension, its flawed instructional sequence of phonics, its controlled vocabulary, and its emphasis on reading as a skills-based process. What it does provide, according to the authors, is a firm "security blanket" for the tutor.

Literacy Volunteers of America

Ruth Colvin founded the Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA) in 1962. This is a national, nonprofit educational organization which provides materials and services to assist in the development of volunteer tutorial programs. LVA uses a language experience approach, teaching the students to read sentences and stories which they have dictated. It does not employ a textbook but teaches skills to meet student needs.

The LVA program relies more heavily on quality training of tutors than other methods. The absence of required text material and the emphasis on the needs of the learner allow for more flexibility in teaching or tutoring, but this method also relies more heavily on the background and training of those delivering instruction. The LVA approach includes tutor training in four basic teaching methods:

- Language experience (experience story)
- Sight words and context clues
- Phonics (consonants)
- Word patterns

The techniques may be used separately or in combination.

The experience story is suggested as a means to involve the student in her learning by developing the lesson around her personal world. In this method, the student is asked to talk about something of interest to her, such as her hobbies, family, or job. She is encouraged to express her opinions and feelings. If the student is reluctant to talk about herself, the tutor might suggest a topic or have her respond to an article or describe a picture. The tutor then records the response in the student's own words. Next the story is copied in manuscript writing; grammar is not corrected. The tutor then reads the story to the student while pointing to each word. Finally, the tutor helps the student read the story one sentence at a time.

Vocabulary is targeted for study and a few words are placed on index cards and taught as sight words. The story and words are given to the student to practice at home. The teacher types a copy of the story to begin a book of student writings. Another set of cards is made to serve as a word resource bank.

In the next session, the story is reviewed and further information may be added. New stories are created from other topics of interest. The LVA handbook, *Tutor*, includes suggestions for stories and ways of adapting the procedure to meet individual needs. A summary of the steps involved is presented as follows:

- Identify an experience by conversation.
- Record the student's words exactly as spoken.
- Read the story.
- Select and utilize target words for instruction.
- Review and adapt in a variety of ways (LVA *Tutor*, 1984).

Numerous examples of actual stories are

reproduced in the guide.

The rest of the handbook focuses on sight words. The four types of words taught as sight words are: survival words, service or utility words, irregularly spelled words, and the first words used to introduce each word pattern. Sight words to study are selected from the students' own experience stories as well as from notices, signs, letters, newspapers, and word lists in the tutor manual. Tutors are urged to teach any words the student may need in her work or household.

A limited number of words is taught, and they are introduced one at a time. Words are first presented in context. They are underlined in the sentence and printed on 3'x5' index cards. The student is asked to repeat the word and to match it to the same word in the sentence. Words which have been mastered are filed separately from those not yet learned. The student uses context clues to identify words which are already in her listening and speaking vocabulary. The tutor presents varied sentences to help the student to recognize the word in different contexts.

The Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic-Tactile (VAKT) approach is used for students who need some or all of those techniques. In the visual activity, the student is asked to look at the word, say the word, then close her eyes and visualize the word. The auditory technique presents phonic elements of a word, drawing attention to beginning, middle, or ending consonants which may serve as helpful clues. In the kinesthetic phase, the student is asked to draw the word in the air or write it on the table or on a paper using the index finger. The tactile approach can include drawing the letters of the word on the student's back or helping her to use her index finger to draw the letters in a pan of wet sand or sugar. Sandpaper letters can be used, as well as raised impressions made with crayons.

Additional sight-word techniques involve arranging index cards to form sentences and choosing words to "fill in the blanks" of incomplete sentences.

The LVA handbook, *Tutor*, also includes a number of suggestions for instruction in phonics. The tutor is advised to begin by introducing consonants with sustaining sounds. One or two patterns are then taught and the student begins to create a letter-sound dictionary. The student picks the key word she will use to remember a specific sound. She is then asked to produce a beginning sound and to recognize the sound in other words. Finally, she will put the sound at the end of words, produce the ending sound, review the sound, and write the letter. A similar process is advised for teaching ending sounds. Further suggestions are given for teaching consonant digraphs.

The LVA handbook concludes that many rules previously taught in phonics programs contain numerous exceptions and may be very confusing to the beginning student. The policy of this program is to eliminate all rules that are not simple enough for the student and immediately useful to her.

Research is cited to support the usefulness of teaching word patterns as an integral part of each lesson. Learning word families enables the student to see the relationships between clusters of letters and the sounds which they represent. Specific instructions are given to teach the student how to rhyme. Teaching word patterns allows the student to read many related words and to approach new words with more confidence. It provides the basis for developing independent word attack skills.

Instructions are given for teaching vowel names, and for carrying out word-pattern activities. The appendix of the LVA manual contains lists of word patterns, with the suggestion that the student keep a notebook of patterns she has mastered. There are further guidelines for analyzing multisyllabic words and for teaching consonant blends.

A chapter on comprehension and thinking skills gives numerous techniques to be used in these areas. Questions are suggested for helping the student to think clearly and clarify what she is reading. The tutor helps the student to define purposes for reading, identify main ideas, and read between the

lines. The tutor encourages fluency by teaching phrase reading. Techniques of paired (duet) reading are explained and tape recorders may be used for student practice. The LVA guide gives hints on using context clues to aid in word recognition. The cloze procedure is explained as another technique to focus on grammar or meaning in making choices.

Once the student has gained some facility in word recognition, she is encouraged to focus on literal comprehension skills. The tutor helps her to recognize the meaning of the passage which she has read. The student must learn to relate new information to experiences she has had. Next, the tutor guides her to make inferences about the materials and to develop critical thinking skills. LVA also suggests exercises for sequencing and following directions.

The guide for tutors contains a chapter of teaching helps for motivation and reinforcement. It provides many examples of games, spelling hints, and uses of alphabetizing. There are suggestions for accessing the library and using the tape recorder as a tool. This unit also gives examples of incorporating maps, calendars, menus, and letters into a student lesson.

A profile of the adult student appears at the beginning of the LVA handbook. The authors attempt to sensitize the potential tutor to the varied backgrounds and special needs of adult learners. The student is presented as a person who may be:

- frightened: afraid to admit his inadequacies.
- creative and adaptable: many are intelligent and capable; they may have a wide range of life experiences.
- insecure and fearing failure: hesitant and apprehensive.
- an uneven learner, or learning disabled.
- continually growing: may need different reading situations and a variety of experiences (Colvin and Root, 1987).

The LVA handbook stresses flexibility to meet the student's growing needs. However, the LVA approach is sometimes cited for the unrealistic expectations it may give a tutor as to the amount of progress typically achieved in a year. According to Joy Rogers in *Lifelong Learning*, many textbooks used by literacy programs have design flaws that encourage failure. According to Rogers, The LVA *Read On* series does not increase readability in a logical fashion; the first four books hover at a grade 2 level, the next five move from 3 to 5 level, and the last book is written on a seventh-grade reading level. She says that sudden jumps in readability may mean failure for the adult who had been doing so well previously.

The underlying assumption of the LVA system is that tutors can be trained to undertake some fairly sophisticated and creative teaching. And although the approach LVA takes is meaning-centered, it does not provide the elaborate security blanket the Laubach system provides in its prescriptive demands.

Volunteer Reading Aides

The Volunteer Reading Aides (VRA) program was developed by the Lutheran Church Women. It is the nation's largest church-sponsored literacy program. The *VRA Handbook* includes suggestions for using both word-pattern practices and language experience stories. It explains methods of teaching a variety of reading skills. The VRA develops, field-tests, and publishes inexpensive materials for adult students and tutors (Lane, 1984).

The *VRA Handbook* contains a chapter on teaching spelling which includes reasons for spelling errors and strategies for teaching. A section on teaching writing discusses copying, sustained writing, drafting, and rewriting. Journal writing, creative writing, and functional writing skills are presented. The guide also includes instructions for teaching comprehension and vocabulary. There are specific suggestions for library use and guidelines for computer-assisted tutoring (LCW, 1984).

An article in the *VRA Handbook* by Martha Lane entitled "Don't Call Me Stupid" dis-

cusses reasons why some people can't read, such as:

- personal poverty.
- state or provincial poverty.
- frequent family moving or migration.
- long-term illness or physical handicaps.
- necessity to earn one's own living [instead of attending school].
- second-class education.
- underachievement and/or limited ability.
- no family motivation.
- married at an early age [dropped out of school].

Lane further discusses how problems of illiteracy contribute to poverty, unemployment, poor health, irresponsible citizenship, and crime (LCW, 1984). She also presents a chapter entitled "What If You Couldn't Read?", which is a graphic example of the frustration felt by nonreaders (LCW, 1981).

Center for Literacy

The Center for Literacy (CFL) is a Philadelphia-based organization which has been training volunteer tutors since 1968. It has published a tutor handbook, *Basic Literacy*, based on its experiences in teaching adult students. The Center's experiences were viewed in light of what had been previously produced by Laubach and LVA. The CFL philosophy is "Do what works!" (CFL, 1988). This approach espouses a holistic view which does not focus on a single series of texts.

The Center for Literacy's tutor handbook emphasizes functional literacy. The goal of this program is to enable the student to use his reading skills in real-life situations. Tutors are encouraged to incorporate into their lessons the functional skills currently most important to the student. These concerns may relate to forms, money, job applications, child-care issues, or obtaining a driver's license. Tutors are also instructed in helping the student to read for enjoyment. There are sections on using the newspaper in a lesson and enabling students to read to their children.

The CFL handbook details the use of the language experience story. A unit on teaching reading strategies discusses basic elements of teaching phonics and sight words. Instruction is given for using context clues. Chapters on comprehension, writing, spelling, and vocabulary complete this guide.

The handbook contains an initial chapter on "Discovering Student Goals." It recommends assessing what the student hopes to gain from tutoring and makes tutors aware that student goals may change. It suggests asking new students the following questions:

- Why did you decide to take these lessons?
- What three things would you like to be able to read?
- What three things would you like to be able to write?

The chapter includes a checklist for identifying goals in four categories: items related to home and family, items related to social and business concerns, items related to self, and job-related items. There are suggestions for functional applications of reading and writing skills. Field trips are encouraged, and practical learning is emphasized (CFL, 1988).

Conclusion

The Laubach method and the LVA handbook are widely used as training formats for tutors. A number of programs, however, provide their tutors with multifaceted training. For example, tutors may be given Laubach materials to use as a starting point, while they are encouraged to incorporate the less structured methods into their teaching.

The variety of materials and methods available to tutors and teachers point to two distinct issues. First, it becomes clear when examining the differing approaches that there is no single "way to teach an adult to read." There is no magical key for tutors and teachers, no single answer. Reasons for the discrepancy in approach and the extreme contrast in approaches suggests much dissension among literacy theorists and perhaps a paucity of good research data to support one method or another.

For tutors and teachers, the lack of clear direction as to the "best method" leads to some confusion and loss of confidence in their ability to teach adults to read.

These authors believe that a combination of models provides the most comprehensive and common-sense approach for most students.

C. SPECIAL APPROACHES TO LITERACY

A review of the literature pertaining to programs of literacy reveals a number of variations for using the basic approaches in specific situations. Programs have been developed to meet the needs of specific populations, such as improving the coping skills of the elderly, organizing low-income residents to deal with housing needs, or teaching adults to read to their children. Certain methods revolve around the recruitment of certain groups as tutors. These include training college students, senior citizens, parents, businesspersons, or helpers who are already assisting the neighbors in a community to serve as literacy tutors.

Senior literacy

The National Council on the Aging, Inc. reported in 1987 that the elderly comprise 38% of the functionally illiterate population in the United States (National Council on the Aging, 1987). Senior citizens generally lacked transportation to the programs which were available to serve them, and they were afraid to go out at night, when many of the courses were held. They were often intimidated by the locations of programs housed in schools because of previous negative associations with institutions of learning. The content of existing literacy programs often focused on the needs of a younger population striving for employment. Effects of illiteracy become intensified for an older adult as the result of life changes. The senior citizen may be experiencing a decline in his health, difficulty in acquiring benefits to which he may be entitled, loneliness from loss of spouse and/or friends. A project called Literacy Education for the Elderly (LEEP) was developed in 1984 to:

- link programs for senior citizens to literacy programs.
- recruit and train older adults as volunteer tutors and peer supports.
- deliver literacy education in existing senior centers, nutrition sites, senior housing, and churches.
- provide administrators, literacy tutors, and trainers with materials on how to organize a literacy program to address the special learning needs of the elderly.

This program set up 27 national demonstration sites in a two-year period. Tutors were trained using the basic models of LVA or LLA. Support systems were formed and inservice provided for the tutors.

The sponsors highlighted the program's success. Working with senior centers and residential sites seemed to be an effective way to meet the elderly in their own environments. The elderly who were trained as tutors experienced an enhanced sense of self-worth, and they were able to share their knowledge and experiences. The students welcomed the challenges of the program, and their self-esteem improved.

The benefits to participating literacy programs included increased community visibility, improvement in reputation, and the opportunity to train tutors for a previously unserved population. The participating programs found that the older adults were reliable and they often had more time and fewer family responsibilities than other groups of tutors and students. This project gave the literacy programs the opportunity to adapt their materials to meet the needs of this specific group (National Council on the Aging, 1987).

Community literacy projects

Other reports describe numerous ways of providing functional skills for the benefit of a community. For example, one program helped a group of tenants in a campaign for their rights. Students were assisted in preparing a circular to announce a meeting,

making lists of tasks involved, forming an agenda, taking notes, and following up on their concerns (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, 1987).

Some programs focus on family literacy. The CUNY model involves adults in reading and discussing children's literature (Handel and Goldsmith, 1989). The parents are motivated by their desire to help their children increase their literacy competence. As adults master children's books in literacy classes, they feel comfortable bringing their new-found reading skill home to their children. In addition to more facility in discussing stories with their children, they also learn more about the way their children learn. As the adults gain positive attitudes toward learning, they become more supportive of their children's schooling. Even for the lowest-level adult reader, success can be guaranteed by beginning with wordless picture books, if necessary. The adult classes encourage participation in discussions and interactions with other adults, which is reported to be meaningful and conducive to learning (Handel and Goldsmith, 1989). Strategic reading skills are taught in each lesson. Since the students are in a proactive role in both the instructional setting and in their reading to youngsters, this is viewed as a model of empowerment.

Another intergenerational approach is the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project. This model attempts to break the cycle of illiteracy. In describing this project, Sharon Darling (1989) reports that the variables of family background, and especially the mother's level of education, are major predictors of a child's chances of success in life. This program believes that helping parents to teach their young children and exert positive influences on them helps to break the cycle of illiteracy. It also contributes to a more self-sufficient adult population.

This model attempts to improve the education for both the "at risk" parents and their "at risk" children. It combines efforts to provide quality preschool experiences for the children, while attempting to improve both the literacy and parenting skills of the parents. Through the Kenan Project, children and their parents are involved in a positive educational experience three days a week. While the children attend preschool, the mothers or fathers receive individualized literacy instruction. The vocational component of the program addresses goal setting, self-esteem, and job readiness through developmental job counseling and through volunteer opportunities for the adult participants in the school itself. They are also taught effective parenting skills, and time is set aside during the day for parents to practice playing with their children. Darling (1989) reports that the Parent as Teachers Time (PAT) involves parents and their children in activities that stimulate and reinforce family interaction.

Special volunteer tutoring programs

Many literacy programs are now structured around the availability of a specific population of potential tutors.

Some colleges are encouraging their students to volunteer in literacy programs, and others are requiring tutoring experience as part of credit courses. In an article about collaboration for literacy, Staryos (1985) makes the following statement:

> "Thousands of college students across the country are an untapped resource who might, if they were encouraged, become adult literacy tutors, adding to the pool of those willing to help another adult learn to read."

The Collaborators for Literacy program was designed by students at Boston University as an intergenerational reading project. The tutors were interviewed to determine their maturity, patience, creativity, empathy, organizational skills, and prior experience. They were trained in assessment techniques, characteristics of the adult learner, and teaching basic reading strategies. Care was given to teach lesson planning and record keeping. Weekly inservice meetings provided a format for sharing, and outside speakers made presentations which enabled the

college students to increase their expertise as tutors.

The Student Literacy Corps funded in Pennsylvania provides college students, many majoring in education, with an opportunity to explore the literacy field in a credit course offered at selected colleges. What makes this program especially valuable is the educational expertise the tutors bring to the tutoring situation, the reliability of students (who must complete 40 hours of tutoring before a grade is issued), and the opportunity to introduce adult education as a breeding ground for future adult educators.

Another potential source of tutors is within the business community. The Business Council for Effective Literacy (1986) published a bulletin of instructions for developing an employee volunteer literacy program. It details the ways in which business persons can volunteer in adult literacy campaigns in areas such as advocacy, public relations, fund raising, and leadership, as well as serving as tutors. The guide presents models which companies may consider for developing on-site projects in which tutoring occurs on company time, in company space. The New York Life and McGraw-Hill programs are examples of this model. There are also instructions for establishing programs in which the company trains tutors to teach in off-site locations. Even if companies merely refer employees to potential tutor-training sites, this program serves an important function in raising the consciousness of the workforce to the problem of adult literacy and the ways in which an individual can become involved in remedial efforts.

This bulletin gives information about the selection of the facility, recruitment and referral, training of tutors, and support of volunteers. It encourages a strong and visible continuing support by the top management.

Support of adult literacy reflects a company's social involvement in the community. It provides an opportunity for business to improve the quality of life for many people with varied individual needs. The company's employees gain new skills in helping others, and they have the opportunity to work with people of different backgrounds. They may develop useful ties to other activities and coworkers (Business Council for Effective Literacy, 1986).

A different approach to tutor recruitment and training involves the use of persons who are already helping friends and neighbors with literacy-related tasks. These "helpers" are persons who are called on regularly for assistance. In literacy outreach projects, the helpers are trained to tutor those they have been helping on an informal basis.

The report, *Literacy Outreach, the Community Link* (Green, 1985), presents a guide to working with literacy helpers. The project involves as tutors a number of adults who would not normally be likely to enlist in formal training programs. Green sees them as a natural resource which can be tapped for teaching purposes. Using the existing helpers has several advantages: the student is already seeking help regularly, so he need not be recruited, and the tutor is a compatible match. Trust has been established and there may be similarities in tutor-tutee background and socioeconomic status. The helper is comfortable with the student's family, history, and environment. The student has expressed his needs with functional literacy tasks and the helper has shown his areas of expertise. Since a mutual respect has usually been established, there is frequently a reciprocal system in which services are exchanged. This sometimes leads to an improvement in the self-esteem of both tutor and student. Many logistical barriers, such as location, time, transportation, and child care, are eliminated by existing arrangements to work in the student's or tutor's home.

The helpers are identified by community members or reached by word of mouth, posters, flyers, radio, or TV ads. Churches or social agencies conduct inservice sessions to illustrate to the helper how the relationship already resembles a tutoring relationship. Helpers meet in groups to share their experiences and are given information about

literacy training and the language experience approach. Not all helpers go on to formal tutor-training programs, but they are led to feel positive about what they are currently doing (Green, 1985). Follow-up continues, and the sponsoring agency maintains support systems.

D. MATERIALS USED IN LITERACY MODELS

A review of the literature on programs of adult literacy indicates that numerous materials have been used to enrich the basic literacy curriculum. Some programs focus on an individual's functional needs, providing instruction in filling out forms for job applications, medical reimbursement, social security benefits, child care, or housing. Lessons sometimes focus on communication, for example teaching the student to read her mail and respond when appropriate.

Family literacy programs such as the CUNY model (Handel, 1989) choose children's books as the basic instructional materials. The Boston University Collaboration for Literacy uses tapes of the PBS television show "Reading Rainbow." Parents watch the tapes and read the corresponding stories in class as preparation for reading to young children.

A number of supplemental materials have been developed to enhance the basic models. Some have been specially designed to include the benefits of both the phonics-based and language experience approaches. The *PROUD Adult Readers* (acronym for "People Reading Their Own Unique Dictations") are a series of books for the beginning reader. Each book is correlated to a Laubach *Skill Book* level, and each contains reinforcement exercises on that specific level. The texts are based on language experience stories, bearing titles such as "My Children," "A Bowhunting Day," and "Off to Pittsburgh." The books were written as a learner-centered, not skill-centered, activity. The developers report that "Through these readers, the students are able to share their experiences with other students, get recognition of the value of their communications and learn about other students' experiences and similar problems and concerns, as well as learning reading, decoding, and comprehension skills" (Mid-State Literacy Council, 1985; New Educational Projects, Inc., 1991).

Margaret Bacon gives numerous examples of how to use poems, articles, and short stories as teaching materials. In her article "What Adult Students Need to Know" (1983), she explains how to develop cloze-procedure exercises for students of any level and how to develop prediction strategies and thinking-skills activities from such readings. Using an eclectic collection of materials is an inexpensive and individualistic way of meeting student needs. However, it relies a great deal on the creativity and organizational skills of the teacher. Bacon states, "None of the methods mentioned is packaged and sold by a publisher with a list of specific skills accompanied by objectives and testing measures. In that sense, they depend a great deal on teachers' resourcefulness and interaction with students."

Many literacy programs include the use of the newspaper with students of all levels. Suggestions for activities have been made in a number of contexts. Virginia Lawson compiled a comprehensive handbook for tutors entitled *Read All About It! Tutor Adults with the Daily Newspaper* (LVA, 1984). This guide begins with a detailed outline of the general teaching approach. It gives specific facts about newspapers and ways to use them in teaching reading and thinking skills. Care is given to maintain awareness of adult skill levels and to set realistic goals. Activities for the classroom include the introduction of the newspaper, the front page, news and feature stories, comics, classified and display ads, social and community news, weather, and sports.

In the second part of the book, the authors present 36 sample lesson plans for individual topics. These lessons are based on items selected from newspapers of various

sizes from different geographic locations. The conclusion of this handbook includes suggestions for tutoring approaches and techniques.

Jinx Crouch, Executive Director of LVA, reports: "The newspaper is ubiquitous. Everyone recognizes it as an indispensable source of information for the concerned, involved citizen. Even non-readers frequently carry a newspaper to appear literate. This tutor handbook is offered to take advantage of this natural motivation as well as to provide access to a real-life, inexpensive tutoring material" (LVA, 1984).

In summary, an unlimited variety of printed materials may be used in literacy sessions. Teacher-selected word games and activities are introduced to enrich the lesson and provide reinforcement in interesting ways. Student-selected materials are a reflection of the individual needs students consider their own current priorities. Both can be used in creative ways to improve reading skills and meet personal needs.

E. CONCLUSIONS

The successful literacy program is based on an understanding of the adult student and consideration of her needs. The potential tutor must be cognizant of the psychological factors which affect the adult learner. The Kansas State Department of Education (1985) emphasizes the importance of developing a trusting atmosphere, while encouraging tutors to be aware of: the inadequate self-image of the student, her limited motivation, past educational experiences, influences of physical factors, competing responsibilities, and social and economic factors.

Jacobs and Ventura (1986) have produced a report detailing suggestions for teaching older adults. Their principles are equally applicable to adult students of any age. They include the following suggestions:

1. Learning should be goal oriented. The approach and methods used should suit the adult student; learning should be specific to her interests and goals.

2. Adapt your teaching style. Attempts should be made to identify the student's personal learning style and to adapt methods to it.

3. Keep motivation high. It is important to recognize frustration and to help the student use new approaches; encouragement and reinforcement from family and friends is important.

4. Meet your students' needs. Tutors should seek referrals to remediate any of the students' hearing, sight, or memory problems and keep the length of the lessons appropriate. Tutors should try to understand and meet the needs of a student who speaks with a strong accent or regional dialect.

5. Evaluate your personal goals regularly. Assess progress in relation to student goals, not teacher expectations; achieving personal goals is more important than advancing standard reading levels.

This article mentions the advantages of using peer support in small-group tutoring, as this increases the amount of individual attention the student receives.

In summary, there are two basic models for adult literacy programs: the Laubach model, which is a highly structured, phonetic approach, and the LVA model, a more eclectic, language experience-based program. Tutor-training programs may present one of these models or a combination of approaches.

Tutor training should produce an understanding of the adult learner. Tutors need to be made aware of a student's specific strengths and weaknesses. They need to be sensitive to the student's background and immediate situation.

Tutors need to be familiar with their curriculum materials and confident in teaching the strategies involved. They should generally avoid using materials which have been prepared for children, as these are often intimidating to the adult student. The creative tutor learns to enrich basic lessons with a variety of supplemental activities and materials. She builds on areas which the student has mastered and skills which he

possesses, gradually introducing new experiences. The tutor should help the student become more self-sufficient and more independent. Lessons should be carefully planned to make constructive use of available time.

It is important for the tutor to assist the student in identifying his immediate and long-term aims. His personal, job-related, family, and community goals should all be assessed. They should be reevaluated periodically, and the tutor should be flexible enough to make changes as they become necessary. The priority of the adult program should be to meet individual literacy needs as effectively as possible, thus improving the student's quality of life.■

CHAPTER 2

ASSESSMENT IN ADULT LITERACY

A. WHAT IS BEING MEASURED?

The term *literacy* generally refers to the state of being literate ... of having the ability to read and write. But it is a relative term which varies tremendously in different contexts. A person who is unable to read the newspaper may possess the skills to decipher woodworking instructions or follow a recipe. Francis Kazemek (1988) summarizes a review of the literature as follows: "... communities practice literacy in different ways: the kind of reading and writing people do on the job is as varied as the jobs themselves—in sum, literacy is a relative phenomenon, constrained by social practices."

A study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) defines literacy as "... using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (Kirsch and Jungeblut, 1986). This type of definition implies an evaluation of the uses of literacy in individual environments. The term *functional literacy* generally refers to the ability to read manuals and newspapers and to use the information gained from these sources to secure employment—a fairly narrow definition. Peter Johnston (1983) states, "Unless we define minimal competency more adequately, testing it will be distinctly awkward."

Lapoint and Kirsch (in Kirsch, 1985) contend that there is no single point above or below which people can be declared literate or illiterate.

Currently used standardized tests attempt to measure reading skills in a manner in which grade-level equivalents may be assigned. Alternative assessments focus on functional literacy skills using a variety of techniques which reflect student progress and individual needs.

Why literacy students are being assessed

Assessment is a key issue in adult education today. The federal government has mandated that students entering federally funded ABE/GED/ESL/Literacy classes must be evaluated within the first nine to 12 hours of instruction. Each adult must also complete a post-test when leaving the program. It is reported that the Adult Education Amendments of 1988 and the implementing regulations of the U.S. Department of Education of August 1989 require that the results of standardized tests be used as one indicator of program effectiveness (*BCEL Newsletter*, January 1990).

Specific guidelines pertaining to assessment instruments and procedures are still being developed on both federal and state levels. The U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) staff and State Directors of adult education met together in July 1989. It was reported that the conference addressed a number of major topics but that "perhaps the most critical issue is the States' need for reliable information on adult student assessment techniques and systems" (*What's the Buzz?*, February 1990). The states discussed the use and misuse of standardized tests and

presented ideas for performance-based program funding.

The Literacy Assistance Center in New York sums up the need as follows: "A major struggle with regard to testing seems to focus on finding ways to be accountable to funders and the public in some quantifiable way, and at the same time creating ways for teachers to use appropriate assessment tools and processes which are an integral part of and inform the teaching and learning process" (*Information Update*, September 1989).

B. STANDARDIZED TESTS

Testing instruments currently in use

The most commonly used standardized tests being used in Pennsylvania at this writing for assessment of adult readers are the TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education), the ABLE (Adult Basic Learning Examination), and the WRMT-R (Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised). A brief description of each instrument follows.

- **TABE.** The TABE is a norm-referenced test which measures achievement in reading, mathematics, language, and spelling. It is comprised of a battery of seven subtests which are provided at four levels: Level E (easy), which corresponds to a 2.6-4.9 grade level; Level M (medium), 4.6-6.9; Level D (difficult), 6.6-8.9; and Level A (advanced), 8.6-12.9. The publisher also provides a Practice Exercise for students who may not be familiar with the mechanics of test-taking, and a Locator Test which enables the examiner to choose the appropriate level of the test to administer to a particular student.

According to the publisher, this test can be used as a preinstructional assessment to assist in placement of new students. It is also employed as a post-test to measure growth in each of the four areas of the exam. It is used to aid teachers in devising individualized instructional programs and providing students with a measure of their abilities (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1987).

- **ABLE.** The ABLE test also contains four sections which measure vocabulary, reading, spelling, and mathematics. It is an achievement test which indicates the following grade level ranges: 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Levels one and two of this test require approximately two hours to administer; level three allows three hours, 25 minutes.
- **WRMT-R.** The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test includes a battery of six tests which are used to measure reading skills and abilities from the Kindergarten through adult levels. The WRMT-R may be manually or machine-scored, and the results are reported in three areas: Readiness, Basic Skills, and Reading Comprehension.

The WRMT-R is designed to be administered within 35-40 minutes. Test items are contained on an easel which is displayed by the examiner. This is a 400-item test which can be scored either manually or by machine.

Other standardized tests

Numerous other tests are available but are much less widely used than the instruments described above. A detailed listing and description of other assessments may be found in *A Resource Guide of Tests for Adult Basic Education Teachers* by Dr. Robert W. Zellers (available from the Pennsylvania state literacy resource centers). Tests are divided into the following categories: Diagnostic, Intelligence, Placement, Interest, Achievement, and Other. Dr. Zellers includes pertinent information concerning the purpose of the test; test description; type of test; grade-level range; subject area(s); time for administration; number of items; number of forms; scoring; date of publication; cost of materials; and publisher's name, address, and phone number. This is a comprehensive handbook which enables the adult educator to select the instruments best suited to testing needs.

Pros and cons of traditional tests

Many standardized tests are valid (they do measure what they claim to assess), and some have a high degree of reliability (a student's score remains consistent when the test is completed at close time intervals). A

number of the commonly used instruments are easy to administer and can be manually scored. In a relatively short time, the examiner can assess the student's reading level and make an appropriate instructional placement. Therefore, these tests provide an efficient method of processing new students.

Proponents of standardized formats feel that testing is an integral part of our society. Many literacy students will be required to take civil-service exams or other tests to enter the military or certain jobs, and some students are preparing for the GED. While firmly recommending alternative assessments, *The Information Update of the Literacy Assistance Center, Inc.* (September 1989) concedes that:

> "While such tests should certainly not be the measure of individual student progress in the adult literacy classroom, we ought not to ignore the value for students of being familiar with them and being able to use them to their own advantage."

One of the negative aspects of standardized testing is that the reading materials encountered by adult students go beyond the types of materials contained in the tests. Irwin Kirsch (1987) states, "As a result, performance on these measures are [sic] often not good predictors of performance on literacy tasks associated with nonschool settings." Adults often make significant gains in their ability to read job-related materials, while showing less improvement on standardized tests.

Teachers who may justify their funding by reporting gains on standardized tests may begin to teach for the test. They sacrifice opportunities to individualize instruction to meet current needs of their students, concentrating on teaching only the skills which will be measured.

Current research defines reading as an interactive process. Karen Griswold (1989) states:

> "In order for readers to understand texts, they must bring their own experience to it. Comprehension, then, is not in the text itself, but rather in the interaction between the reader and the text."

A student does not possess a specific reading "level," no matter how experienced he is with reading. The difficulty of the material which he can handle is partly related to his background knowledge in that area. Griswold feels that if reading is based on a person's ability to make connections to the text, the test needs to present material which is appropriate for that person. She also contends that since people understand texts differently, questions do not accurately assess comprehension. Instead, they reflect the reader's ability to answer that type of question.

The TABE has also been criticized for treating vocabulary in isolation. Even when phrases are presented for target words, there is no larger context for the phrases.

Another concern is the use of "grade level" scores. It is obvious that the adult reading at a third-grade level is a very different individual, with vastly different coping skills, than the eight-year-old who reads at a third-grade level. Life skills are not assessed by standardized reading tests.

Testing to assess progress can be a very negative experience for the adult student. Griswold (1989) reports that: "Students view their TABE scores as a definitive mark of failure or success." Some students have improved their reading in a number of ways, reading longer and more difficult materials and connecting new information to their life experiences, yet their TABE scores may not reflect a significant improvement. They may feel discouraged by lack of an "official" numerical gain.

Although the TABE claims to provide constructive diagnostic information, Griswold (1989) feels that this instrument does not provide data which is useful in planning future instruction. The distinction between vocabulary and comprehension scores is not helpful, and the TABE does not give the teacher an adequate picture of the student's specific strengths and weaknesses.

In the February 1990 issue of *What's the Buzz?*, Mae Dick summarizes the current

evaluations by stating that TABE "... is not only an inappropriate instrument for individual assessment, but that it does not measure what students know and have learned, that it does not inform the teaching and learning process, and that in fact it may act to discourage students as they reinvolve themselves in the educational process."

C. ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

The term *informal assessment* implies a rather unstructured and less credible type of measurement than standardized testing. Kenneth Wolf (1993) suggests instead the label *informed assessment*, and he describes this as a process which:

> ... knowledgeable teachers engage in when they systematically observe and selectively document their students' performance through multiple methods, across diverse contexts, and over time as students participate in meaningful activities." (p.519)

Thus, rather than one test providing one snapshot of abilities on one day, there is a commitment to obtaining an ongoing record of growth in a number of situations over a period of time. It appears that the trends in assessment are beginning to switch away from a single measurement to a more authentic and thorough assessment of the student (Rose, 1993, p.7).

Meryl Lazar (1992) implores educators to improve assessment so that it is more congruent with classroom instruction. She feels that test results should accurately reflect the learning which has occurred as a result of classroom instruction, that assessment should provide opportunities to collect information in a number of ways, to give a thorough and meaningful picture of what the learner has actually achieved over a given period of time (p.22).

Broad alternative studies

Concerns about the negative aspects of standardized reading tests have resulted in a number of alternatives.

Irwin Kirsch (1987) describes the "competency-based approach" as one which goes beyond the measurement of school-related tasks by including a broad range of materials that adults are likely to encounter at home, at work, or within the community. He discusses the 1975 Adult Performance Level Project (APL; see also page 98). In addition to testing reading and writing skills, the APL measured computation, problem solving, and interpersonal skills "... as they interact with the areas of occupational knowledge, consumer economics, health and law" (Kirsch, 1987). This test was composed of nonschool types of materials.

In 1982, the state of California developed the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). This is a test of basic skills based on items which are relevant in the context of everyday life. CASAS focuses on adult life skills, providing information for accurate placement, ongoing assessment, and movement across levels. It links the curriculum to the assessment. Scores are based on a system of scales rather than on grade-level equivalents. A number of states are currently using this instrument to assess ABE programs and to determine employment eligibility in JTPA and welfare-reform programs (*BCEL Newsletter*, January 1990).

The National Adult Literacy Survey (Kirsch, 1993) was based on the definition of literacy used by its predecessor, the National Assessment of Educational Progress—that literacy is the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential. The operative word is *use*, implying an emphasis on the functionality of literacy, not just word recognition.

In 1988, the U.S. Congress asked the Department of Education to begin to define the nature and the extent of adult literacy in this country. They called for a national household survey of the literacy skills of adults in America, and a contract was awarded to the Educational Testing Service to design and conduct the National Adult Literacy Survey (Kirsch, 1993, p.xi). A group of over 13,000 adults, aged 16 and over, was selected ran-

domly, while at least 1,000 were selected from each of the 12 states which chose to participate in a study designed to produce results specific to their states. Furthermore, 1,100 inmates were selected to provide information about the prison population. Thus, the NALS Survey results comprise a huge set of data which provides information essential to understanding the scope of the problem.

The 1993 Report is an overview, and subsequent reports are to address literacy in the workforce, literacy in education, literacy among older adults, literacy in the prison population, literacy and cultural diversity, and literacy practices.

In addition to the basic definition of literacy reported above, three specific scales were developed:

Prose literacy: the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts that include editorials, news stories, poems, and fiction...

Document literacy: the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in materials that include job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and graphs...

Quantitative literacy: the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, using numbers embedded in printed materials ... (Kirsch, 1993, p.3-4)

The use of three different scales is a positive change from previous measures which reported one single score of combined literacy skills. This instrument reports scores on various types of literacy, giving a clear description of adult strengths and weaknesses. A scale of 0-500 is represented for each of the three types of literacy, indicating proficiency in that particular area, and five literacy levels are defined along each of the scales:

Level I	(0 to 225)
Level II	(226 to 275)
Level III	(276 to 325)
Level IV	(326 to 375)
Level V	(376 to 500)

The NALS report notes that between 40 million and 44 million adults (about 22% of the total population) demonstrated skills in the lowest literacy level defined by this test, 54 million (25-28% of the total population) performed in Level II, and 61 million adults (nearly one-third of the population) performed in Level III. Only 6-8 million Americans (3-4%) scored on Level IV of the test. This is an extremely comprehensive report which presents reports for the population as a whole, as well as by subgroups defined by level of education, age, race/ethnicity, country of birth, region of the country, and disability status. (See also pp. 99-100.)

Statistics such as these raise a red flag to educators committed to helping students to meet functional literacy demands. In a section on reflections, this report states that:

> "Even if adults who performed in the lowest literacy levels are not experiencing difficulties at present, they may be at risk as the nation's economy and social fabric continue to change." (Kirsch, 1993, p.xix)

Alternative assessments in literacy programs

Various new types of assessments are now being employed by many programs of adult literacy to help learners achieve their goals. The *BCEL Newsletter* (January 1990) lists the following rationale: "... *what* is assessed must reflect what the learner wishes or needs to accomplish; that the process must build on the learner's experience and strengths rather than deficits; that assessment is not something done *to* the learner; that it should not be externally imposed nor shrouded in mystery, nor separated from what goes on in the regular course of learning activity." The article goes on to state that assessment should be an organic part of the learning experience. Ideally, it should involve a collaboration of the teacher, the learner, and the text. It should respect the student, reviewing her progress and focusing on planning what should come next. Such assessment should include a variety of procedures.

Information Update (Literacy Assistance Center, Inc., September 1989) presents several techniques of assessment. *Writing folders* and *portfolios* are among the alternative strategies now being employed to measure student progress. The student files samples of her notes, lists, drafts, revisions, and final compositions, as well as her journal entries. All entries are dated, and the teacher reviews the folder with the student, discussing spelling and the mechanics of writing. The instructor guides the student in reviewing her progress and planning to meet her current needs.

Compiling a *reading file* allows the student to keep track of the books she has read. In addition to bibliographical information, she records a summary of each book and her reactions to the material. Sara Hill (1989) reports that the student may "... reflect on what she's been reading, how she may be understanding books differently or enjoying books more." The reading of letters, newspapers, magazines, recipes, and other materials may be recorded, as well as the books which were completed.

Interviews are often used in the initial intake and screening of students. They are very useful in assessing student needs and interests and in setting goals. Further interviews at regular intervals are now encouraged for assessing what goals have been met and what future strategies should include. They can be structured to enable the student to realize the importance of her gains.

Pros and cons of alternative assessments

Perhaps the most important advantage of the authentic portfolio- and performance-based assessments is the role the student plays. In standardized testing, the student is at the mercy of the test writer and the test administrator and has virtually no input into the assessment process. Current forms of alternative assessment involve the student in evaluating his own work. As Callendar (1992) concludes: "Instead of hierarchy and the dominance of the educator role, I seek equality and hegemony of the learner" (p.154).

In addition to the participation of the student and the ownership which ensues, alternative forms of assessment are more directly linked to what is actually being taught. Calfee (1993) comments that: "... the power of portfolios lies in helping teachers and students focus on the teaching/learning process" (p.334). It appears that this type of assessment allows the student to have much more insight into how he learns; therefore; there is a much greater chance of developing habits of lifelong learning.

Portfolio assessment also empowers teachers to participate in evaluation much more than they do in standardized testing. Teachers want to be in charge of their instructional programs, and Calfee (1993) cites the importance of the theme of "ownership." In alternative assessment, the instructor is empowered to select the modes of evaluation which best fit the curriculum and the teaching methods being implemented. In sum, meaningful feedback can be obtained as a direct outgrowth of the program.

Alternative forms of assessment are better able to show small increments of progress. This is especially important to the adult beginning reader or learning-disabled student who might never make sizable gains on any standardized measure. The instructor can focus on the unique strengths of this fragile student and design methods of documenting the smallest of gains. Progress of the low-level student must be visible to both instructor and student in order for learning to continue.

Most literacy teachers would agree that some forms of alternative assessment are currently in place in many adult classrooms. These might include teacher observations, interactions with students, and conferences to discuss progress. However, three things are often missing in this scenario:

1. a systematic means of reflection on what constitutes demonstrable progress
2. a predictable set of criteria (outcomes) for judging progress
3. collaboration—the student's stake in assessment (Lazar, 1992, p.22)

A number of variables obviously exist which need to be clarified by the teacher and the student to make alternative assessment credible.

Calfee (1992) notes that: "Also missing is discussion of conventional (or unconventional) approaches for establishing validity and reliability" (p.535). Instructors who use portfolio assessment argue that the authenticity of the process guarantees the validity of the product, while the reliability of portfolio assessment is generally not addressed.

In most literacy programs, some sort of grade is assigned to each student at the end of each cycle. Instructors who use alternative assessments have no clear guidelines for how to assign grades on such products, as the state will not accept a score given to a portfolio as documentation of specific progress for funding purposes.

Portfolios have been criticized for being too unwieldy. Many literacy instructors go from site to site, teaching in churches, community centers, drug rehab facilities, and homeless shelters where storage space is at a premium. It is the instructor's responsibility to find a home base for materials, either at an office or at home. Many literacy teachers keep materials in crates and tote bags in their cars as they go to various locations. Thus, storage of portfolios is an issue to consider. The cost of providing materials and storage is mentioned by Calfee (1992), who says: "External authorities may entertain the idea of portfolios, performance and exhibitions, but cost effectiveness will eventually carry the day." (p.537)

Conclusions

Rose (1991) notes that some ideas of evaluation are very much tied into program development modes (p.7). She feels that the trends in evaluation are closely tied to the current educational research. Thus, one might conclude that as curriculum and instruction become more authentic, assessment might follow suit.

In viewing the overall picture of assessment, Lazar (1992) feels that evaluation should be:

- broader than gains in grade-equivalent scores [but]
- more systematic than informal day-to-day observation and interaction (p.22).

It appears that adult literacy instructors need guidelines to provide measures of incremental progress which will be useful to both the student and the teacher. Ehrhart (1992) concludes that "... a program seeking to attract and retain adult students should recognize exactly what it is offering: not education per se, but transformation" (p.30).

The idea of transforming the adult student into a self-directed learner should indeed take precedence over attaining documented grade-level increases on standardized tests.

Patton (1992) feels that the word *evaluation* should never be used, but that the emphasis should be on self-assessment which supports self-directed learning. He states that meaningful evaluation involves a process that leads to insights that can be used to implement change (p.10). Informal, "informed" assessment leads the student to grow as an individual, to take pride in accomplishments, and to seek new opportunities for learning.

In an article entitled "Beyond Evaluation Myths," Michael Patton (1991) proposes that evaluation should be a *learning process*:

> "The process *is* the product in evaluation. If you engage in a meaningful, humanistic and empowering process, the evaluation experience will be meaningful, empowering and insight-generating." (p.9)

He debunks the myth that outcomes and impacts are hard to measure by arguing that it is better to have "soft" data about important issues than "hard" data about those which are unimportant and irrelevant (p.9).

Suggestions for literacy educators

- Remember that coming to school may be a very traumatic step for the adult student.
- Make the intake process as nonthreatening and comfortable as possible.

- Help the student to clarify long-term goals and objectives.
- Assist the student in setting short-term, attainable goals.
- Do not use the word *test*; say a "screening device" or "placement indicator."
- Involve the student in placement decisions.
- Invite the student to participate in developing the individual education plan.
- Provide frequent opportunities to measure progress.
- Join the student in celebrating gains, no matter how small!
- Guide the student in becoming a self-directed learner.■

81

CHAPTER 3

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE READING PROCESS

A. INTRODUCTION

In *Illiteracy: A National Dilemma* (1987) David Harman cites a basic literacy test administered by the U.S. Bureau of the Census which disclosed that approximately 13% of the U.S. population over the age of 20 is "illiterate." That amounts to 17-22 million adults. Other estimates range from 4% (ETS, 1976) to 33% (Kozol, 1985), based on the varying definitions of literacy.

Whatever statistics are used to emphasize the problem, it is meaningful both when one considers the toll on society a literacy-deficient populace has as well as the toll poor literacy skills have in the personal lives of the adults trying to get help in our programs.

Many people become involved with adult literacy because of a concern for adult literacy issues, or perhaps as a result of dissatisfaction with elementary or secondary teaching. Teaching an adult to read can provide a powerful, involving experience for both the teacher and the learner. The overwhelming majority of our adults have decided to commit to education, perhaps for the first time in their lives. Teachers and tutors interviewed for *How Adults Read* expressed a fervent love for their work and a long-term future commitment to adult education. They are prepared for literacy teaching primarily by having taught the children of the adults they hope to serve. The teachers may have degrees in education but be unaware of adult learning theories. Or, perhaps they once taught social studies or history, yet now find themselves teaching an adult how to read. Tutors tend to be less prepared; often, their sole preparation for the powerful experience in which they will soon be engaged may be a sincere desire to help our adults in any way.

Dedication, along with the skills of elementary education, are two very important components of success in adult literacy education. According to our survey, however, tutors and teacher do not feel they have a background in reading that is sufficient for making instructional decisions that are best for their students. Yet, studies point to evidence that a small amount of knowledge about the reading process can have a powerful effect on the way a tutor teaches.

The following topics were chosen to provide a knowledge base for administrators, tutor and teacher trainers, and teachers in the search for additional information both about the nature of the reading process itself, and of how adults, specifically, learn to read or attempt to improve their reading skills. It is hoped that the relatively small amount of knowledge covered here will lead to better instructional decisions for the adults who are seeking the magical skills of reading.

B. WHAT IS READING?

Of course, we all know how to do it. And perhaps we can formulate a reasonable definition of the process, but the emphasis on one aspect of the reading process over another drives each of the various literacy programs and philosophies. It is, therefore, important to discuss the reading process as a

whole and to examine how the interpretation of the process determines the materials and methods used.

Overall, there are about 80 different models of the reading process. For the purposes of this curriculum, we will examine the three basic viewpoints on reading:

- *Reading is the decoding of letters into discrete sounds and the blending of these sounds into words.* The "phonics" approach is based on this viewpoint.
- *Reading is oral language coded into print.* An offshoot of behavioral psychology, the "linguistic" approach exemplifies this philosophy.
- *Reading is a psycholinguistic process by which the reader uses minimal graphic cues to hypothesize about the author's intended meaning.* This approach to reading is associated with the cognitive branch of psychology.

A *phonics* approach to reading places a strong emphasis on decoding skills to teach beginning reading. The sounds and appearance of each letter, usually beginning with the consonants, are intensively taught (phoneme-grapheme relationship). As the sounds are learned, the reader blends them together in sequence and thereby pronounces words. Some reading practitioners call this a "synthetic approach." The sounds of the words are then encoded into inner speech from which the reader derives meaning in the same way as listening.

Some additional characteristics of this model include stressing phonics generalizations and ignoring exceptions, except for final *e*; and controlled vocabulary which utilizes mainly only those sounds and patterns that are taught. Proponents of this method argue that over 80% of English words are phonetically "regular," but a study by Lewandowski (1979) found that only 41% of 334 high-utility words studied were phonetically regular.

A *linguistic* approach to reading instruction is based on translating oral language into print. Like the phonics model, reading is responding to the same language readers already know in oral form. This implies a controlled vocabulary based on the meaningfulness of language. Leonard Bloomfield in the 1940s spoke out against the strict use of the phonics method and the sight-word approach to teaching reading. In brief, he believed that translating printed words into their spoken equivalent is the foremost goal of reading. The cognitive system that the reader has already developed in response to learning oral language as a young child is considered a sufficient framework for reading. Bloomfield recommended the teaching technique of "minimal pair" practice instead of the artificial exercise of phonics blending. For example, the sound and graphic representation for *an* might be taught using sentences such as "Nan can fan Dan." The linguistic approach also recommends teaching the alphabet by letter name but not by sounds; the avoidance of words with silent letters in beginning reading (such as *write*); and avoidance of the teaching of direct letter-to-sound correspondence. Only the most essential of common words, such as *a*, and *the*, are taught as sight words in the linguistic model.

Some adult literacy materials employ the linguistic method for teaching certain skills in beginning reading, and there is some evidence that adults can benefit from a certain amount of this type of instruction. When adults look for "little words in bigger words," we may be seeing some evidence of the use of this strategy.

The phonics and linguistic approaches are considered "bottom-up" models of reading because they use the building blocks of letters to construct words, and words are put together to form meaningful sentences. A bottom-up model assumes that the basic blocks of language—letters—can be identified and interpreted into sound. At that point, oral-language facility takes over. In these approaches, the sounding-out of letters or of identifying minimal pairs in words are the keys to unlock the door to reading.

A newer model of reading is based on the "top-down" concept. Called the *psycholinguistic* approach, it was popularized

in a landmark article by Kenneth Goodman entitled, "Reading as a Psycholinguistic Guessing Game" (1967).

A top-down model views reading as a communication process in which the reader attempts to guess the meaning of a passage using the fewest graphic cues necessary. As the reader continues to guess at meaning, provisional ideas are either confirmed by further reading, disconfirmed if further reading contradicts the original idea, or questioned as to the guess's rightness or wrongness. Unlike in the bottom-up model, graphic information from which the reader sounds out words is only used when the reader hits a stumbling block. But generally, the reader moves along using a sight-word approach in which he recognizes the word instantly. The best readers use as few words and graphic cues as necessary. Poor readers tend to focus on each word as a separate hurdle to jump and often fail to put the words into meaningful context.

Rumelhart (1977) asserts that for skilled readers, all process models seem to occur simultaneously. This phenomenon, referred to as an *interactive model*, allows for a variety of reading behaviors and strategies according to how difficult the material is, how proficient the reader, how much previous information is known about the subject, and a variety of other real-life factors.

C. IMPORTANT CONCEPTS IN READING

If we concur with Rumelhart's approach, that reading is essentially an interaction of a multitude of processes, then a quick examination of the elements of reading may set the base for the examination of reading as it is unique to the adult learner.

Comprehension

There are several concepts regarding comprehension that the literacy teacher should understand.

The first and most important concept is that comprehension is the goal of what we do. Even if we choose to teach with a phonics-based approach, this is merely an approach to comprehension. Several studies have found that adult poor readers tend to view reading as essentially a process of naming words (Gambrell and Heathington, 1981; Boraks and Schumacher, 1981; Meyer and Keefe, 1988). Our first job as teachers is to encourage our students to comprehend what they are reading. Thorndike (1973) is credited with focusing reading instruction on comprehension. In his 1917 study, "Reading as Reasoning," he states, "It is the vice of the poor reader to say the words without actively making judgments concerning what they reveal."

Another key concept is that, most often, comprehension cannot be distinguished from thinking. Reading a passage requires organization of thought, attention to details, holistic synthesis, judgment, and problem-solving behavior. Even if our students begin as nonreaders, we can prepare them for reading by verbally preparing them to think. Sticht et al. (1974) assert that there is a substantial relationship between listening comprehension and reading comprehension in adulthood. If an adult can comprehend a fairly complex verbal message, and act on its direction, then that adult, quite likely, will also be able to act on the written message when learning the skills of reading.

Fredrick Davis (1944) was the first to state that reading comprehension is not just one process but a variety of skills which all merge in the act of "understanding." His analysis demonstrated several facets of comprehension, including: 1) identifying words and understanding meanings, 2) finding answers and facts, 3) drawing inferences not explicitly stated, 4) recognizing the author's mood and tone, 5) recognizing sentence and paragraph sequence as they contribute to comprehension through structure, and 6) recognizing the main idea.

Comprehension levels

Betts (1946) delineated three degrees of comprehension which will help in the understanding of the reading process: inde-

pendent, instructional, and frustration.

- *Independent level* means the material is understood at a 90% comprehension rate and that the reader can recognize 99% of the words in the passage. At this level, the reader can understand the passage without assistance.
- *Instructional level* means the material is understood at a 75% comprehension rate and the reader can recognize 95% of the words. Material at this level is best presented with teacher intervention and assistance. The material is challenging but not so difficult as to lead to frustration.
- *Frustration level* means that the reader will comprehend below 50% of the passage and can only recognize approximately 90% *or fewer* of the words. The reader attempting this material will appear nervous and tense. The reading will be word for word with little integration of meaning.

Being aware of the three comprehension levels can help the teacher and tutor focus on material difficulty, but teachers of adult reading must remember that these criteria were based on child reading models. Mikulecky (1982) reminds us that work-related material familiar to the adult reader can be comprehended at up to two grade levels above the levels of newspaper prose. Gillis (1981) also found that adult readers vary significantly according to the type of style and content of material read. In short, when the material is familiar or when motivation is high, the adult can read several grade levels above that determined as readable by the above criteria. Conversely, when the material is unfamiliar and unmotivating, the reader may actually demonstrate lower ability than the teacher may judge as readable. (See the section on Readability, below, for additional detail.)

Schema development

The *Dictionary of Reading* (IRA, 1981) defines schema as "1) a generalized description, plan, or structure, as a schema of the reading process. 2) a conceptual system for understanding something, e.g. Grace's mathematical schema helped her understand statistics" (p.286). Researchers refer to schemata as more than reading, as a general cognitive skill rather than a reading skill per se. Pearson and Spiro (1981) propose two characteristics of schema, hypothetical and abstract. Hypothetical, because we can only hypothesize that this phenomenon exists through the observation of human behavior. Abstract, because it is the invisible glue that binds a variety of concrete experiences into a unified concept.

Research has consistently demonstrated both in adult literacy and in other fields that the more information one knows about a topic, the better it is understood and remembered, either verbally or in writing. This finding can be explained through schema theory. If a person has prior experience with a particular event or object, the event or object can more rapidly fit into her cognitive pattern.

In simpler terms, schema is a mind's inner framework, much like the boards used in the construction of a house. Upon this frame, information is added, expanded, and conceptualized. Without this frame, information may be misplaced or lost and is not merged into a person's experience. One example might be familiarity with the game of baseball. If the student reads, "The catcher threw the ball to the pitcher," without a frame of reference or background experience with baseball, the main idea of the sentence will be essentially meaningless. In fact, one who is unfamiliar with the game may assume that the "pitcher" was perhaps a pitcher of milk.

According to recent studies, one's schema can profoundly affect reading in the areas of reading speed, information retention, literal comprehension, contextual clue recognition, reading purpose, and psychological acceptance or rejection of information presented.

For example, Steffensen, Joag-dev, and Anderson (1979) found that when American and Indian university students read passages on the wedding customs of their native culture, reading speed increased. But when the

students read about the customs *of the other culture*, reading speed was significantly slower; in fact, reading the unfamiliar passage took almost one-third longer. Hudson (1982) attempted to induce conceptual frameworks prior to reading. Lower-level readers benefited significantly from the pretreatment.

Johnston and Pearson (1982) found that a brief assessment of background knowledge prior to reading a passage can predict performance on that passage better than a standardized reading test (1980). Gillis found that adult beginning readers demonstrated higher instructional levels of familiar content material than unfamiliar (1981).

Reading as problem solving

Diehl and Mikulecky (1980) and Mikulecky et al. (1987) further explore the reading/writing process as it applies in a workplace situation, as opposed to a school-based literacy environment. The authors separate the language processes by the function under which the processes will operate: 1) reading to do—reading to accomplish a specific task, 2) reading to learn—to acquire information for later use, and 3) reading to assess—examining print to evaluate usefulness for a specific task. They relate the structure of these language tasks to the problem-solving model explored by Flower and Hayes (1981). According to Mikulecky, the worker examines the task environment for audience, purpose, and knowledge of the task (schema), then begins the solution process through generating and organizing ideas and setting goals. The worker then translates the ideas into written text, reviews the message for appropriateness through evaluation and revision, and later, perhaps, monitors the process.

Phonics

According to the *Dictionary of Reading* (Harris and Hodges, 1981), phonics is "an approach to the teaching of reading and spelling that stresses symbol-sound relationships, especially in beginning reading" (p.238). It is just one of the processes in word recognition in which the reader attempts to make meaning from the symbols on the page.

Phonics represents one aspect of the "bottom-up" theory of reading, that of first identifying letters and then using those letters as building blocks until they identify words, then phrases, then sentences in sequence (see also p.82). As these symbolic sequences are formed, the "inner voice" repeats them verbally or subvocally (silently) and meaning is made in much the same way meaning is derived from speech.

In another view (Robinson, Faraone, Hittleman, and Unruh, 1990), reading is the author's voice represented by sound symbols and "the process of reading, and learning to read was simply a way to recapture that voice in the same orderly manner used by the creator of the text" (p.11). "Comprehensible text for the learner was decodable text" (p.13).

A high number of words in the English language are phonetically regular, that is, can be recognized using the sound-letter generalizations on which phonics instruction is based. Words from Latin roots have a high rate of regularity and phonics predictability. Unfortunately, many of the most common words in English have Anglo-Saxon derivations and do not always follow the generalizations.

Readability

The concept of readability refers to the ease with which a reader can identify and comprehend the words on a page. The match between the reader's ability and the difficulty of the material can be the adult student's basis for deciding whether or not to stay in the reading program. Adults very clearly expect reading to be a difficult challenge but are highly sensitive to material that is either too easy, therefore insulting, or too difficult, which is frustrating.

Readability formulas or scales are methods of measurement that intend to predict, in a quantifiable form, the expected diffi-

culty of a passage for a particular reader. Readability formulas like the Fry (1968), Dolch (1948), Fleisch (1934), FOG (1968), and Harris-Jacobs (1974) are helpful but often mask other critical factors that may make a passage readable for adults. The scales are based on elements such as average sentence length, word difficulty, word rarity on a word-frequency scale, word length, average word syllables, word concreteness/abstractness, concept density, sentence complexity, and many other factors. But most readability scales were based on research using children's basals and trade books and may, therefore, be inappropriate for use with adults who may read functional material for everyday survival. Readability formulas are, in reality, measures of writing style; they do not measure comprehensibility directly.

While readability formulas may act as a guide, more powerful factors are at work when choosing a correct passage level for an adult:

- Short words are not necessarily more readable words. In fact, longer words give the adult more graphic cues (more letters and more word shape) to work with.
- Most word-frequency lists are based on language found in elementary-school basal readers. Adults require a quite different set of words to make the world of words more comprehensible.
- Nonreading adults have learned to rely on the patterns of oral language as heavily or more heavily than adult readers. For them, the simplistic sentence patterns found in most literacy materials do not imitate their speech patterns and may sound like a foreign tongue. Blau (1982) asserts that simple language is unnatural and, therefore, less comprehensible. An adult new reader expects to see the same language patterns in print that he uses in everyday life, but these are not usually the patterns in literacy texts.
- How readable a text appears may also depend on graphic factors such as print size, number of pictures, use of subheadings and titles, use of boldface and capitalization, and graphic aids such as graphs and charts.
- According to schema theory, the more familiar we are with the topic of a passage, the more quickly we understand and remember the concepts contained in it.
- Finally and most importantly, the motivation to read is intimately involved with how much effort will be expended in reading the text. As Henry James is quoted in Ham (1957), "Nothing, of course, will ever take the place of the good old-fashioned 'liking' a work ... or not liking it: the most improved criticism will not abolish that primitive, that ultimate test." Numerous studies have found that material of interest to a child or adult may be read several grade levels above expected competency.

Learner modalities

Every reader, whether high achieving or lagging behind peers in development, brings certain strengths and weaknesses to the task of learning to read. All readers differ in the way they perceive stimuli, in the way the stimuli are processed and integrated, and in how the stimuli are remembered.

Researchers have agreed on these categories of modality:

- *Visual modality*—the use of vision in acquiring information. Other researchers have also included competence in the integration of these modalities as crucial to the learning process.
- *Auditory modality*—the use of listening to acquire new information.
- *Kinesthetic modality*—the use of touch (tactile) and body movement to acquire sensory information.

Teachers and tutors must make an essential decision before beginning instruction. Is it better to 1) remediate the weaknesses intensively in an effort to create a well-rounded reader or 2) determine what strengths the adult already possesses and design instruction that capitalizes on those strengths? Although there is some dissension, researchers often recommend the latter strategy for use with adults because:

- Adults have an immediate and urgent

87

need to learn to read quickly for survival, and teaching based on established strengths is generally productive faster.

- Adults have delicate emotional states because of repeated failure at a task that most of their peers have mastered. Using a strength-based approach will ensure small but immediate successes.
- Adults have preferred ways of learning and usually these ways are based on what succeeded for them before. Attempting to ignore those preferred ways may result in absenteeism or program termination (Boraks and Schumacher, 1981).

A great number of adult literacy participants may have one or more of various disturbances in perceptual ability. Perception is defined as "the ability of a person to recognize the incoming sensory information and extract meaning from it" (Gearheart in Zintz and Maggart, 1989, p.542). The process of gaining meaning from the print on the page is inextricably tied to the quality of the adult reader's perception.

Most adults with a marked deficiency in auditory or visual strength in the early elementary years later found compensatory strategies in the strong modality which, therefore, developed increased proficiency in that modality. For example, one adult new reader could recite dates that various events were to happen in the coming year with far greater facility than her teachers.

Within the general categories of modalities, specific perceptual differences exist. For example, fine auditory discrimination, visual discrimination and configuration sensitivity, visual sequencing ability, ability to recall auditory sequencing, ability to blend sounds, visual spatial orientation, and the integration of the various perceptual modalities are just a few of the elements which may determine strength of modality.

Another important factor often overlooked in literacy programs is the physical impairment which may determine modality strength. Strang (1968) reported that farsightedness exists in 47% of slow readers as compared to only 12% in the general population of children. More complex vision problems may not have been detected in these adults (muscular imbalance, problems of convergence, image integration or fusion, hyperopia) with the simplistic screening used in many school systems and these vision problems continue to plague the adult reader as well. A later study on groups of adult learners found that between 53% and 80% had some type of vision problem. Furthermore, the lower the reading level, the more vision problems were discovered (Bristow, 1992). Two points to keep in mind here are that: 1) visual efficiency may not be the sole reason for weakness in a given modality and 2) vision problems often can be rectified. Literacy practitioners should recommend a vision screening for any adult wishing to begin reading instruction.

Auditory perception, arguably, also plays an important role in strength of modality. Again, auditory-acuity problems should be dismissed as a possible cause of reading retardation by screening each adult beginning reader using standard audiometric tests administered by a specialist. Additionally, adults who had hearing problems as children may suffer from residual perceptual difficulties in the area of print. If the primary reading instruction had been in the area of phonics when the student was a child, the reading difficulties were most likely exacerbated.

Researchers have often cited proficiency in auditory perception, discrimination, and memory as important to reading achievement. Wepman (1962) designed a simple test to measure a person's ability to discriminate between often confused sounds. Poor performance on that discrimination measure often points to auditory perception difficulties. Although about 27% of first-grade children (Strang, 1968) do not meet minimum levels, Meyer and Keefe (1990) report that 70% of adult readers at the lowest levels of literacy demonstrate severe auditory discrimination and/or hearing problems.

The implications for literacy education are important. If an adult appears to learn

best using auditory cues, then phonics instruction, direct instruction using listening rather than visual learning, and doing "homework" or demonstrating knowledge of something verbally may offer the best chances for success. But if the adult learns and depends on more visual cues, then phonics may or may not work successfully, and practice which includes a lot of visual presentations (a sight approach) may be the best choice.

One note of caution: there is insufficient research relating literacy achievement of adults with modality preferences to draw any solid conclusions. Therefore, teachers and tutors should proceed with caution in this area but be sensitive to the preferences expressed by literacy students when asked to describe how they learn best.

In summary, adults have already developed strong preferences in the way they choose to learn and have often strengthened their stronger modality at the expense of the weaker. Teachers and tutors would do best to structure instruction to enable students to depend on their stronger abilities in positive ways.

Metacognition

The heuristic approach—encouraging students to discover meaning from text—was described in the work of Thorndike (1917) over 70 years ago in his article, "Reading As Reasoning." The article compared reading to thinking—the complex world of learning, selection, judgment, analysis, synthesis, problem-solving behavior, organization, evaluation, etc. "Reading may be wrong or inadequate because of failure to treat the responses made as provisional and to inspect, welcome, and reject them as they appear" (p.432).

Goodman later (1967) echoed Thorndike's views when he called reading a "psycholinguistic guessing game."

Expecting to find meaning and acknowledging the goal of reading to be comprehension of ideas is the mark of a good reader (Myers and Paris, 1973; Brown, 1980; Flavell, 1980; Gambrell and Heathington, 1981).

Of great importance in achieving the goal of comprehension is to 1) bring an active search for meaning to the reading task in order to recognize what is being understood and what is not, 2) judge the importance of understanding in the particular context, 3) activate reading strategies appropriate to the task, and 4) judge whether the strategies indeed lead to comprehension.

Several new terms have emerged in the literature in the past several years: *metacognition*, *metacomprehension*, and *comprehension monitoring*, all meaning about the same. Flavell (1978) described metacognition as the knowledge and control one has over one's own thinking and learning processes.

Metacognitive activity, then, is the control center in the brain that directs our efforts as we read. It is the " second sense" that sends us a warning when there is comprehension failure or when new information is inconsistent with the information that came before. Brown (1982) separates the aspects of metacognition into two general fields: knowledge about one's cognition and the regulation of one's own cognition. J.D. McNeill describes metacognition as composed of three elements (The Secondary Schools Subcommittee of the IRA, 1990):

- *Self-knowledge*—a personal vision of one's ability to complete a certain task; knowledge of one's strength or weakness; belief that when a task is completed correctly, success will be achieved.
- *Task-knowledge*—refers to the knowledge that the task demands; learners know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it; they correctly judge how difficult the task is and, if necessary, change strategies to meet the demands.
- *Self-monitoring*—awareness of how well one is completing the task; while reading, this involves knowing when one is not understanding and how important it is to stop and do something about it. As the Reading/Language in Secondary Schools Subcommittee of the IRA (1990) aptly put it:

> "Effective learners approach classroom tasks like enlightened consumers. They

> enter a learning situation like customers in a shopping mall; they know why they are there and what they are looking for ... Less effective students operate more like aliens from another planet, extraterrestrial beings placed in a learning situation with orders to impersonate the consumers ... if we watch them closely, we notice they are aimless, they are selecting items off the shelf at random ..." (p.461)

Brown (1982) asserts that young readers and poor readers systematically fail to monitor the meaning within texts and don't always know when they are comprehending and when they are failing to comprehend. Good readers move along consistently in an automatic state of fluent reading until a triggering event signals comprehension failure. The construction of meaning is slowed, and extra processing must be directed to the problem in what she calls the "debugging state."

Myers and Paris (1978) found when they studied second- and sixth-grade readers that older and better readers had more strategies to try to solve the problem of noncomprehension than younger and poorer readers. They took active steps to understand the passage.

Gambrell and Heathington (1981) compared adult literacy participants with a college-level group. They found that the better readers, the college group, were more aware of the importance of sentence order, had more strategies for remediating problems, and identified comprehension as the central goal of reading. The adult literacy group differed significantly in all measures. (See also pp.93-94.)

In summary, metacognition, or the evaluation and the monitoring of one's comprehension, is an essential factor in teaching an adult to read.

Developmental language

Forester (1988) found both similarities and differences in the emerging literacy of the beginning reader, adult and child. She asserts that when both categories of learners draw on their bank of knowledge about language, when they utilize learning strategies in their repertoire, both groups will exhibit good progress. In working with Laura, an adult illiterate, Forester found that, like a child, there was a predictable emerging literacy continuum. But, unlike a child, Laura was not able to apply abstract language rules effectively to the reading process. Laura also found little benefit from copying text; this did not facilitate the innate learning of language and phonetic rules. Forester did find that an imitation of a child's naturalistic whole language learning worked best for Laura as well. Instructional techniques such as the encouragement of inventive spelling and a learning sequence which encouraged writing before reading instruction worked for Laura once she was adequately convinced that perfect spelling was not necessary and that it indeed hindered her progress.

Forester also maintains that, in order to progress, the adult, unlike the child, needs to take charge of her own learning utilizing a trial-and-error approach involving active "thinking-trying." Forester asserts that a focus on comprehension as opposed to word-calling is essential when teaching adults who have failed in prior attempts to learn to read and who appear to have incorrect perceptions of the nature of reading.

Metalinguistics is a term used to describe the knowledge and concepts a child or adult has developed about language and the way language is used in the reading and writing process. This umbrella term describes information a child or adult may have developed about print (left-right progression, upper- and lower-case letter usage, etc.), story schema (expectation of happy or sad ending, setting the scene and time of the story, etc.), or perhaps even the nature of words, sentences, and paragraphs.

Vygotsky (1934, 1962) first discussed the contrast between a child's spontaneous use of language and his awareness of certain rules governing language use. This ability to analyze the knowledge of language as discrete from meaning emerges later in devel-

opment, succeeding the child's ability to use language features.

Piaget theorized that a child progresses through the sensori-motor period into a period known as *preoperational representation*, wherein the child begins to grasp symbolism. In later stages of development, the child will analyze the world of symbols and will anticipate, hypothesize, and verify by retrospections of the previous operations to understand unfamiliar concepts. A child's language development parallels general development: it moves from the concrete and that which is personally experienced to the more abstract and that with which the child and/or adult has had little direct experience.

Ryan (1980) states, "Metalinguistic knowledge, or linguistic awareness, involves the ability to focus attention upon the form of language in and of itself, rather than merely as the vehicle by which meaning is conveyed." Some adults, struggling to read the words on a page, focus on the use of language, almost exclusive of meaning as they attempt the process of decoding—a progression exactly opposite natural language development in children.

Some educators believe that metalinguistic development is primarily an academic process and that the very act of reading changes the way children and adults think about language. They believe that the act of reading is the breaking of linguistic code already learned in oral language.

Many researchers believe that a rich oral language experience is adequate linguistic preparation for the task of reading. But Leu (1982) hypothesizes that there is a significant difference in the types of syntactic structures found in young speakers and those found in written discourse. In print there is a higher incidence of passive construction, participial phrases, appositives, and coordinate and relative clauses. These structures exist in some adult speech but much less often in children. Written discourse at all levels, in contrast to oral language, can be described as detached, without context, complex, integrative, and explicit. Stated simply, the more challenging the reading becomes, the less it resembles speech.

Whole language instruction

A whole language approach to literacy instruction involves an integration of the language arts: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. The language experience approach is an example of a way in which literacy practitioners regularly involve all of the language arts simultaneously. Stephen Reuys (1992) sees this approach as part of a movement towards a holistic, integrated education. Current ABE and GED instructors are sometimes criticized for spending too much time on fragmented exercises which are unconnected. He emphasizes the teaching of reading as a whole process, not a "bundle of sequenced sub-skills" (p.22). The purpose of the whole language approach is to involve the reader in working with real texts in real contexts. Its goal is to focus on the whole student and the role which literacy plays in this student's life, in his or her immediate environment. Reuys concludes that whole language has the potential to reinvigorate the field of adult literacy because:

> "This process can be furthered if we see these holistic approaches, not as isolated, independent concepts, but rather as a group of interrelated ideas, linked by common elements of educational philosophy and deriving strength from one another in their implementation." (Reuys, 1992, p.23)

Whole language instruction focuses on the student's use of language in a natural context in relation to their goals, needs, and interests. One of the tenets of whole language is that reading, writing, speaking, and listening must be purposeful activities and they should not be done merely for the sake of filling in a worksheet. In *Whole Language: The Debate* (1994), moderator Carl B. Smith summarizes proponents' views that:

> "We ought to recognize these facts and organize environments that afford individuals and groups opportunities to use the cultural, social, aesthetic, etc. as-

> pects of literacy in a variety of environments, for a variety of purposes, in pursuit of a variety of interests ..." (p.xix)

Proponents argue that language is a social process which is driven by the purposes of the individual learners, and that acquisition occurs within the context of their cultures.

Whole language, in a developmental sense, is based on the notion that language acquisition is an orderly and predictable sequence in a setting that is rich with opportunities for literacy experiences. For a child, this means a home where books are read aloud at night, where members of the family communicate often by speaking and by writing, and where there is a strong awareness of writing as a means of effective communication. An adult new reader is already aware of the functions of language. But the barriers lie in the adult's avoidance of literacy exposure and literacy practice. Unfortunately, certain reading instruction methods focus on reading as a decontextualized activity, divorced from real-life goals, needs, and interests. Reading and writing are best learned concurrently and interrelatedly, not in discrete, sequential steps.

Many typical adult literacy materials are patterned after the basal types of readers often used by children. They rely on an approach which builds sequential skills and uses a decoding approach to reading and writing. The relationships of sounds and symbols are taught explicitly, following a structured approach. Lehman, Johnson, and Lehman cite that:

> "The Laubach Readers, for example, include 'stores' with tightly controlled vocabulary that are written expressly to fit specific word patterns, much like phonetically oriented basal reading programs for children" (p.15)

They conclude that whole language instruction integrates all of the language processes—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—enabling oral language to support the development of written language.

Current GED and ABE programs neglect to include listening skills. In an article entitled "Big Books for Big People," Karen Hicks (1992) describes a process for integrating visual and auditory modes by presenting selections on transparencies in adult classes. As one page of a book is shown on the screen, the teacher tracks the words while reading aloud. Students follow along, hearing the instructor's voice, while following the words on the screen. A tactile/kinesthetic mode can be included by having the student track the words on the screen as the teacher reads them. After this introduction, contextual vocabulary is studied, characters identified, and the plot clarified. After this listening, reading, tracking, and discussion, students are asked to write their reactions to the story in their journals. This approach not only integrates the language arts skills, it also provides a vehicle for introducing "real" literature, not just fictional stories with controlled vocabulary. Hicks describes presenting Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1967), to an adult literacy class. She reported that this book:

> "... complemented nicely the life experiences of my students, most of whom were minorities. The class reveled in the strength and dignity with which the oppressed characters in the book faced their daily challenges. They marveled at the beauty of the language and at the skill of the author." (Hicks, 1992, p.25)

Guszak (1985) asserts that reading is "caught" not "taught." Active literacy instruction that incorporates good literature into the daily curriculum brings the best of the authors' voices to fuel the reading effort. Children's author Tomie de Paola says, "There is no substitute for real books. They are rarely boring or sanitized or squeezed into a 'reading system' that children can smell a mile off" (Kline, 1988). Real literature can motivate otherwise uninterested adults and can supply their egos with adult topics to validate their involvement in literacy classes. The literacy instructor can read Steinbeck, Sinclair, and Shakespeare to a new reader and they can discuss what they "read" together.

The use of higher-level literature also encourages the development of higher-order thinking skills which will, eventually, be translated into practice in other contexts beyond reading and writing. Boraks and Schumacher (1981) found adult readers in their study to be lacking in higher-order thinking skills, especially the ability to perceive abstraction.

Amy Rose (1993) supports whole language approaches because they provide a series of dynamic interactions in a process of creating meaning (p.5). She encourages instructors to give the extra effort required to teach the whole student, within the context of the community. Literacy teachers must be sensitive to the culture within which the student interacts. Rose warns that:

> " ... this effort for greater participation also calls for a different kind of professional, one who is not simply following a cookbook of methods, but who can work with individuals to develop unique approaches consonant with both individual and community values. It means developing the skills necessary to analyze a group and develop appropriate strategies." (p.5)

Translating the whole language approach into teaching practices might mean:

- reading aloud regularly.
- giving the student constant access to books in the classroom.
- providing books which can be taken home.
- providing class or tutoring time for uninterrupted silent reading of student-selected materials.
- encouraging students to write about what they have read.
- providing times for students to hold "book talks."
- encouraging students to "read like writers."
- providing activities that focus on literature, while inviting students to respond to literary selections (Kline, 1988).■

CHAPTER 4

ADULT READING THEORY

A. ADULTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE READING PROCESS

The beliefs the adult beginning reader (ABR) holds about the nature of the reading process directly affect the strategies used and the successful attempts to comprehend. In addition, the emotional baggage or, as Krashen (1983) calls it, the "affective filter," controls the amount and type of learning about the nature of reading which is allowed into the adult learner's knowledge bank. It becomes clear that what adult reading teachers instruct may not be what adult beginning readers actually learn.

Meyer and Keefe (1980) conducted a study of 100 adults involved in adult basic education to determine their perceived model of the reading process. The mean reading level of the adults in the study was 5.4, and all of them considered themselves poor readers. The researchers used a questionnaire based on Burke's unpublished Reading Interview. To judge their perception of what reading is, participants were asked five questions: 1) When you are reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do? 2) Who is a good reader that you know? 3) If you knew someone was having difficulty reading, how would you help them? 4) What did they (your teachers) do to help you learn? 5) What do you wish you could do better as a reader? The resulting data were categorized to determine the ABR's model of reading, use of grapho-phonic strategies as opposed to a meaning-centered strategy approach, perception of reading as influenced by past reading education, and exposure to good reading models in the immediate community.

Through the researchers' interpretation, 47 of the 100 people in the study viewed reading as decoding, 38 as word identification, and 15 as a meaning-making model. Therefore, 85% of the adult-disabled readers viewed reading as a process of sounding out words or word identification.

The researchers cite one case study. Frank, a man in his 40s, was asked to orally read a passage. He stumbled through the reading, making numerous miscues. When the teacher asked him to retell the story, he performed credibly, missing none of the major points of the passage. But when his teacher complimented him on his ability to comprehend, he "blurted out in frustration, 'yes, but that's cheating!'" (p.123).

Because Frank perceived reading as primarily a process of word identification, his reaching the goal of reading—the act of deriving meaning from print—went unrecognized. This misunderstanding of the purpose of reading underlies the way the vast majority of adult new readers approach printed material.

Meyer and Keefe recommend that we simply talk to our students about reading for meaning and that we deemphasize phonics and word-calling. They conclude that "the model of reading the adult reader has in his/her head may be the disabler" (p.124).

Support for the contention that ABRs perceive the goal of reading to be word

recognition is the Gambrell and Heathington (1981) study of 28 adult beginning readers' awareness of the reading process. The authors labeled this "metacognitive awareness." In general, the researchers found that adult beginning readers have a limited understanding of reading as a cognitive process" (p.215). This ABR group's responses in an oral interview were compared with a good-reader population of college students. Adult-disabled readers were defined as readers who had not yet achieved a fifth-grade reading level. The interview was based on one developed by Myers and Paris (1978) but modified for use with an adult population. Categories of responses were established for each interview item, and the responses were calculated for each reader group separately.

The researchers found significant contrasts in the reading behaviors of the college (good) readers and the adult-disabled (poor) readers. The conclusions were as follows:

1. Adult-disabled readers see a closer relationship between motivation to read and success in reading: when asked whether a rich person would be likely to read better than a poor person, the good readers overwhelmingly responded that the rich reader would more likely read better. In contrast, the poor readers said that the poor person would read better because poor people try harder to read and would be more motivated readers.

2. Both groups see prior knowledge of content as important to success in reading.

3. A majority of adult-disabled readers do not recognize the importance of textual structure in reading. While good readers recognized that the order of sentences in a paragraph constituted a "structure," only 43% of the poor readers were able to relate that a paragraph or story had some kind of order, although prompts did reveal a general awareness of introductory and concluding sentence patterns.

4. Both groups acknowledged that the heart of reading is finding the gist or main idea of the passage. In a follow-on question, the adult good readers also felt that reading for main idea is easier than reading word by word. In contrast, 53% of the disabled readers find word-by-word reading easier than reading for meaning and identify a good reader as one who "can pick out sounds," or "reads quickly." This contrasts with the more capable reader group, which identified the good reader as one who understands the meaning of the passage.

5. When questioned on reading mode, 36% of the adult-disabled readers believed that reading aloud is faster than reading silently. Only 4% of the good readers gave that response.

6. One-third of adult-disabled readers were unable to identify even one strategy to use when faced with an unknown word. All the good readers had several remediating strategies.

7. When asked what makes someone a really good reader, 79% of the adult good readers gave a meaning-centered response while only 21% of the poor readers focused on comprehension. The poor readers responded with factors such as, "can pick out sounds" or "reads quickly" (p.219).

Although the researchers did not attempt to control the effect of more years in the educational system and, therefore, more exposure to correct "teacher-like" responses, some of the findings were important. The disabled readers, like young beginning readers, see reading as essentially a decoding process rather than an effort to extract meaning from text. They have misconceptions about the nature of text and reading behavior and, when faced with an unknown word, utilize far fewer strategies than good college readers.

The findings of the study support Hare and Pulliam's (1978) conclusions that suggest a causal link between metacognitive awareness and reading behavior.

B. TYPES OF ADULT READERS

Meyer and Keefe (1988) assessed 106 adult beginning readers using a diagnostic program which included a vision test, an auditory discrimination measure, a listen-

ing/capacity test, a miscue-analysis procedure, and the Slossen Intelligence Test (1984).

Through an analysis of results, Meyer and Keefe organized ABRs from area literacy programs into five diagnostic groups: 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4. Each of the groups conformed to a unique diagnostic set, or profile.

Group 0 students, constituting less than 10% of the population tested, consisted of nonreaders who had extremely limited general knowledge, very poor auditory memory, difficulty copying a paragraph, and inability to add single-digit numbers. Over 78% of the group members had language disabilities, vision problems, and significant auditory-discrimination problems. These students progressed very little over a two-year tutoring experience.

Group 1 could read some simple words, but their listening capacity was better than Group 0. Of this group, 70% believed that reading is sounding out words and most group members could perform simple computation.

Group 2 adults had a significantly higher listening capacity, even though their reading level was equal to Group 1. A high percentage had language and physical disabilities. This group also viewed reading as primarily a decoding task and resisted word chunking.

Group 3 adults had fewer language disabilities than Group 2 and were significantly higher in instructional and listening-capacity levels. It was felt that members of this group would benefit from direct teaching about the nature of reading and the appropriate goal of comprehension.

Group 4 members were generally found in GED programs, which suggests they are capable of reading at a high-school level. They appeared to score in the range of average intelligence and had fewer disabilities of any kind. Worth noting is that the researchers found, even in this group, that only 25% viewed reading as a meaning-making activity.

Of the adults tested, 42% had hearing problems or auditory-discrimination problems and 66% had vision problems, most often with near-point vision.

An ethnographic literacy study

In an ethnographic study of adult readers' strategies, Boraks and Schumacher (1981) studied the factors influencing the acquisition of productive and nonproductive reading strategies in adult beginning readers.

The authors maintained two assumptions: 1) that the reading behavior of the ABR differs significantly from the CBR (child beginning reader) and 2) reading behavior is defined for the purposes of the study as strategies "generally described in terms of the cues a student uses when dealing with text" (p.2).

The authors assert that a reader has four broad categories of cues available for word recognition: *graphic* (visual), *phonemic* (sound/symbol correspondence), *syntactic* (grammatical acceptability), and *semantic* (meaning). The choice of strategy type would depend on variables of the individual. The authors stress that although the profiles of ABRs are highly idiosyncratic, some important data regarding the factors which promoted the use of certain strategies were obtained. The study derived its data from field observation, interviews with both ABRs and teachers, consultant services, and related research.

The sample in the study consisted of 60 ABRs, 18 to 60 years of age, blue collar or from a lower socioeconomic level, and enrolled in literacy classes in the Richmond, Virginia, area. Since the sample was nonrandomized, no generalizations can be made.

Boraks and Schumacher identified eleven variables which influenced the miscue patterns of the ABRs: peer behavior and modeling, textual constraints, teacher quality, previous teacher quality, prior instruction in reading, perception of how one learns, reading skills, prior experience with print, personality factors such as risk-taking, belief about language, and the perceived model of the reading process. The authors label these

variables a "tentative taxonomy" and "a first step in the search for deeper meanings" (p.17). There was no consensus among the researchers as to the interrelationship of these factors.

Miscue analysis of ABRs during oral reading was used with the caveat that these taxonomies were developed for use with children (Goodman and Burke, 1973). The highly idiosyncratic nature of the adult reader should lead to a cautious interpretation of results.

The researchers contrasted the reading behaviors of readers who progressed with those who did not. The progressing readers attempted more strategies, monitored meaning, manipulated vowels, used syllabification, corrected in phrase units, and identified what they knew before attempting to apply any corrective strategy. The readers who made less progress were tolerant of meaningless words in lists, failed to use context or monitor meaning, did not persist in their attempts to identify words, and overused graphic cues, even if the syntax and meaning were inconsistent. In addition, the strategies of nonprogressing readers did not vary significantly, whether they read lists of words or whether they read in paragraphs.

Contrary to what was expected, ABRs overall made little use of semantic cues, even after they had progressed satisfactorily. When topical discussion (a prereading activity) occurred before the student read the passage, the ABRs' use of semantic information increased dramatically. It could be hypothesized that ABRs have the capability of semantic strategies but do not seem to be aware that employing those strategies will lead to increased comprehension. In a corollary finding, the researchers found one effective teacher differed from the others merely in the amount of time she modeled ideal reading behavior rather than lectured about it. Therefore, the researchers assert that adults learn more from *how* teachers teach than from *what* they teach.

Persevering behaviors were hallmark to the sample studied. The ABRs tended to persist in their use of graphic cues as a primary strategy, even when other strategies were intensively taught. Boraks and Schumacher hypothesize that the use of semantic cues may require a higher level of cognitive skill, which some ABRs lack.

The researchers found that most ABRs tried to learn words by spelling them, pointing to a strong likelihood that influences from prior reading instruction which stressed decoding were still evident even after a significant lapse of time. These spellers persisted in attempting a phonics-like strategy yet did not succeed—a repeat of earlier attempts to learn to read.

A significant factor identified by Boraks and Schumacher was rate of attendance. There seemed to be a relationship between high drop-out rates and students' perceptions that they were not being taught the way they wished to be taught. When teachers responded to the suggestions of the students in choice of methodology, the students stayed.

Inattention in the classroom increased when the possibility of an incorrect answer was the highest or when the task was not well understood.

Two motivations tended to drive the ABR to attempt reading instruction: anxiety-frustration and growth expansion. The researchers suggest that the teacher identify the motivation and adjust instructional strategies accordingly.

Auditory discrimination and adult readers

As part of the profile, there appears to be a high incidence of auditory-discrimination deficiency in the adult beginning reader population. As children, many adults had attempted to learn to read using a primarily phonics-based approach. Several studies suggest that an important proportion of the population in literacy programs has significant problems in associating sounds with letters and in blending sounds into words. Meyer and Keefe (1988) found that of the 111 adults tested, 42% had auditory-dis-

crimination problems. In defense of phonics instruction, Lewkowicz (1987) reminds us that phonics is just one tool of reading and that it is a valuable aid in eliciting the meaning of a word which exists in the student's oral language but not yet in the sight-word memory. Malicky and Norman (1982) compared the strategies of ABRs who made reasonable gains in a reading program with a no-gain group. They found that the no-gain group may have been too text-bound in their approach and paid undue attention to letters and words.

C. DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF ADULT READING

There is some support for the contention that adults, much like children, move through developmental stages in their choice and use of reading strategies.

Chall (1983) identified six "stages" of reading development in children:

Stage 0: At this prereading stage, children infer about the purpose for print and story schema.

Stage 1: The young child is print-bound and focuses on reading as primarily a decoding exercise.

Stage 2: In this transitional stage the reader becomes unbound from print and meaning emerges as the goal of reading.

Stage 3: Reading becomes primarily meaning-based; reading for learning and information is a central theme.

Stages 4 and 5: Knowledge-based strategies predominate and the reader begins the sophisticated process of reconstruction—the evolution of new concepts from the known.

Jones (1981) first identified three "phases" of adult reading development. The researcher asserted that in Phase 1, reading behavior is comprised of language-processing strategies, much like Chall's Stage 1. In Phase 2, word recognition begins to automatize and is supported by continued language-based strategies. In Phase 3, students achieve independence from print and rely heavily on vocabulary and background knowledge.

A study of 123 adults reading at grade levels 1 through 8 (Norman and Malicky, 1987) analyzed reading strategies using a miscue analysis of oral reading. The researchers had hypothesized that adults would show a pattern of skills development much like Chall's studies of juvenile readers, cited above. They analyzed oral reading of passages ranging from levels 1 through 8 using the Reading Miscue Inventory (1972). The testing session was ended when the subjects reached a frustration level. As outlined in the Inventory, categories of analysis consisted of 1) graphic similarity, which reflected print processing; 2) grammatical acceptability, which reflected knowledge-based strategies; 3) semantic acceptability, which reflected the use of knowledge-based processing; 4) meaning change; and 5) successful corrections, which the researchers assert combines both print and knowledge-based information use.

Norman and Malicky assert that two clear developmental stages emerged from the analysis. Levels 1 to 3 suggested that adults used a combination of print and knowledge-based strategies more or less equally. However, in Level 4 there was a marked shift to the use of knowledge-based strategies but little change in language-based usage. As reported in other studies, miscue rates actually increased after Level 4, but these miscues preserved author meaning and had no effect on reading efficiency. In fact, the researchers contend that these miscues are evidence of increased integration of print and knowledge strategies.

The researchers drew the implication that print-based proficiency did not significantly contribute to reading gains after Level 4 and that adults who were proficient in drawing on their background and linguistic knowledge for comprehension were more successful in reading.

Malicky and Norman, along with Jones, therefore concluded that two distinct stages of adult reading can be identified: a beginning level in which the reader relies heavily

on print and a later level in which the reader integrates print information with background and linguistic knowledge. A transitional stage, referred to in Chall as an "ungluing," seems to occur at about Level 3, the end of the beginning level. During this transition, adults are moderately proficient at grapho-phonemic skills. And it is only with this skill that the ABR can utilize the correct background knowledge to match the reading context.

There is some question as to the nature of Level 0, the prereading stage identified by Chall, in ABRs.

D. ADULT FUNCTIONAL LITERACY

In 1956, W. S. Gray wrote, "A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is assumed in his culture or group."

What exactly functional literacy entails has evolved with time and location. Cook (1977) traces the history of adult literacy education in her book, *Adult Literacy Education in the United States.* In 1900, the U. S. Census defined a literate individual as a person ten years of age or older who could read or write in a native language; 10.7 percent of the population answered "no" according to the definition. Those counted as literate in this census and in the later censuses of 1910, 1920, and 1930 included those who could write only their names and a few words or who could write in any language, not necessarily English.

In 1959, for the first time, the Census Bureau conducted a study which defined illiteracy as the inability to read and write a simple message in English or in any other language. As was found in past surveys, adults who were older, lived in the South, were poor and unemployed, and/or lived in rural areas were more likely to be illiterate. It was during the Korean war that a fourth-grade level was set as the minimal literacy level.

The term "functional literacy" was used to describe minimal literacy in the 1960s. Definitions varied from 1) reading and communicating below the third-grade level to 2) lacking the necessary skills to enter vocational training to 3) less than five years of formal education.

Cook's (1977) sample of bank forms, driver's-license applications, and medical-aid forms require a reading competence equal to the tenth grade. It is clear to Cook that an individual who is able to read only minimal survival material at a fifth-grade level is severely handicapped.

In 1971 the University of Texas began a study meant to identify a set of skills and knowledge areas which describe functional competence. The Adult Performance Level (APL) Project (1975) stated as its purpose the establishment of functional-competency standards which are free of school-based literacy standards. The study proposed that there be an application of skills (reading, writing, computation, speaking/listening, and problem-solving) to specific topical areas (consumer economics, occupational knowledge, health, community resources, and government and law). The APL authors maintained that the definition of functional literacy could be determined only for an individual at a particular point in time, but that "Functional competency is directly related in a mathematical sense to success in adult life. This is an operating assumption which underlies all APL research activities" (Northcutt, 1975, in Kazemek, 1985). Functional competency is also related to the income level, education level, and status of occupation a person has achieved. The criteria created by the authors are classified in three categories:

APL 1: adults who function with difficulty,
APL 2: functional adults who are not proficient, and
APL 3: proficient adults.

As Kazemek notes, "Thus, a janitor with seven years of education and a yearly income of $8,000 is placed in category APL 1" while a doctor would be in category APL 3.

Kazemek and others challenge the validity of the APL study because of its middle-

class values orientation, methodological flaws, and the procedures used to create the 65 functional competencies. (For a complete critique, read Kazemek, 1985, "An Examination of the Adult Performance Level Project and its Effects upon Adult Literacy Education in the United States.") In spite of the criticism, the functional-competency approach has contributed significantly to altering the curricular approach in English as a Second Language and literacy education for years after the APL project. In a study by Flaherty (1977) 60% of the competencies were validated as important in field tests with ABE students. Flaherty also found a low correlation between academic reading proficiency and competence on instructional tasks.

Hayes and Valentine (1989) attempted to determine the self-perceived functional literacy needs of low-literate adult basic education students. Data were collected from 160 ABE students reading at or below a sixth-grade reading level. Results revealed 20 factors, rank-ordered according to the subjects' self-perceived importance of needs. Three categorizing factors were created from the needs: everyday reading and writing, math and measurement, and special literacy tasks. Finally, the gains scores of ABE students were compared to the needs the students chose.

The implications of this study are revealing and are summarized below:

1. Clusters of students identified needs quite different from other clusters, indicating the need for teachers to individualize functional topics for each individual student.

2. Some of the functional needs identified as very important were those areas in which the students made the smallest learning gains. Conversely, the largest gains in learning were in areas that the students ranked lowest in need. This indicates that one of two situations may exist: that ABE teachers are out of touch with the needs of their students and are spending the greatest proportion of teaching time on those areas which are not important to the lives of their students or that the textbooks which drive the instruction may not be sensitive to the real needs of their adult-learner audience.

3. Some tasks perceived by ABE teachers as very important were low-ranked. The authors theorize that the students may have developed successful coping strategies (neighbor assistance, mimicking prior tasks, etc.) for dealing with these frequently performed tasks and, therefore, do not perceive the tasks as ones they need to learn. However, tasks performed relatively infrequently (tax forms, checking accounts, medical labels, etc.) are those for which dire consequences could occur if the literacy task is not performed correctly.

To summarize, providing the opportunity for each adult to determine his own functional needs seems the most reasonable solution.

Negin and Krugler (1980) conducted a study in the city of Milwaukee to delineate the functional needs of the adults living in that community. The subjects were asked to determine the frequency of use for each type of reading material suggested by the National Reading Activities Survey. The respondents were also asked to rate each type of reading material as to its importance to general "well-being." Some of the same material types identified in Hayes and Valentine also were highly ranked by the subjects of the Milwaukee study. Again, checking accounts, health reading, and income-tax reading appeared on their survey along with others.

The authors also conducted readability analyses to determine the level of the materials identified. Most of the material was determined by the Fry formula and the Dale-Chall to be categorized in the 9-12 level reading range, well in excess of the theoretical competency of the functionally literate population if one uses traditional expected reading levels.

The National Adult Literacy Survey (Kirsch et al., 1993) was based on the definition of literacy used by its predecessor, the

National Assessment of Educational Progress—that literacy is the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential. The operative word is *use*, implying an emphasis on the functionality of literacy, not just word recognition. This large national study, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education, determined that nearly half of the 191 million adults in the United States, including non-English-speaking populations, were unable to make practical use of literacy skills in everyday life. These tasks included filling out a bank-deposit slip and reading a bus schedule. (See also pp.76-77.)

When summarizing the research on functional literacy, one has to remember the specific social context of the literacy task, the self-perceived importance of the task to the learner, and the past ability of the adult learner to compensate for task deficiency through alternative means to literacy and numeracy competence. Perhaps the most important concept is that the learner is the best source of information about functional needs and that no single external "authority," whether that be a national study, a life-skills textbook, or standard curricula, can compete with the learning efficiency offered through identifying and teaching the learner's individual functional needs.

E. METHODS ESPECIALLY FOR ADULTS

Allow students to choose

Are most literacy students reading for relaxation and enjoyment? Probably not. Recreational reading is a foreign concept for most adult students, since reading has always been an assignment for school or a survival skill for communication. In our literacy classes, many students do improve their reading skills to levels at which they are able to handle functional reading tasks. They are able to read their mail and handle what is required in the workplace. However, they never read for enjoyment. Writing in the *Journal of Reading*, Gwen Taylor (1993) states: "There are millions of people who have learned to read but choose not to, except minimally" (p.569). She goes on to explain that no matter what course she is teaching, each student is required to simply read a book: to select a book that he or she would like to read and to read it anytime during the semester. No written book report is required, but at the end of the course, students sit in small circles in which they tell their classmates about what they read. The instructor does not control the discussion or evaluate the participation, for this is an exercise designed specifically to promote reading for pleasure. It is an exercise to promote reading as a leisure activity.

Get a feel for real books

When asked to describe their childhood reading instruction, most adults remember being in a "reading group" ... and it was often the lowest reading group in the class.

Whether they were called the "Bluebirds" or "Group III," they knew that they were at the bottom of the barrel. What do they remember about this group? Worksheets. The Commission on Reading (1984) reports that the average child completes 1,000 workbook pages in the course of a school year. The lower-level readers get less time to read connected prose but more time examining "bits" of reading. A quality adult literacy program will provide time to read. Since 1991, the District of Columbia Public Library has sponsored a book discussion series for adult new developing readers entitled "A Feel for Books" (Morgenthaler, 1993). This program uses humanities-based materials with students reading on grade levels 2-6, and:

> "While discussing stories, students end up talking about life. This natural philosophizing connects classroom to real life. It is also an outlet for students to show what they know through memories and personal anecdotes." (p.570)

Students focus on ideas and critical thinking, not on specific reading skills, and they

are encouraged to give emotional responses in lieu of contextual details.

Read for fun

For the most part, beginning adult readers do not find reading an interesting pursuit and may have negative attitudes toward reading. The words *reading* and *enjoyment* do not go together. Most of the materials published in the literacy area focus on two skill areas: phonics and functional literacy. Unfortunately, for the adult reader, phonics reading instruction may be lacking in excitement, and functional literacy materials such as want ads and job applications may be important but will probably not emotionally engage the reader in the reading act. According to Rigg and Kazemek (1986), "These materials narrow rather than enlarge a student's view of literacy; and the snippets of language they display are almost always bereft of verve or grace" (p.218).

In an attempt to engage the adult readers, authors such as Tana Reiff (1991, 1993) are producing material for pleasure reading. Her "Timeless Tales" set of eight anthologies includes traditional stories from many cultures, retold in an easy-to-understand series written on the second- to third-grade level. Designed to absorb and entertain the adult new reader, the myths, fables, and tall tales introduce the student to the art of storytelling, in which legends and folktales have been passed down from generation to generation. They also provide the adult beginning reader with a text which can be shared with children for mutual enjoyment.

Still, Rigg and Kazemak contend that many literacy texts closely resemble the very same texts the adult is accustomed to from prior school experience. They suggest the following remedies for lack of reading motivation:

- Read real literature like poetry and other fiction.
- Find material that is readily available and inexpensive.
- Look for materials that integrate the concepts of whole language by promoting discussion and listening in response to the readings.
- Use lyrics of popular songs or Bible reading—whatever sparks the adult student's interest.
- Make time for Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) in each session.
- Read orally to adult students.
- Encourage writing as a response to literature.

Heathington and Koskinen (1982) recommend that literacy administrators have students fill out reading-interest inventories and send them to publishers because many published materials are inappropriate for our adult learners. The authors believe that motivation is a key component in primary programs but that little attention has been paid to the role of motivation with adult readers. Passages need to kindle the excitement and meaningfulness so often missing from published materials.

Adult literacy instructional materials which include "real literature" tend to introduce mostly prose selections. Conniff, Bortle, and Joseph (1994) have experimented with using poetry in the adult literacy class, and they learned that the reading of "great poetry" ... usually considered an esoteric exercise ... can be used effectively in the ABE class. Poetry can be used to improve the self-esteem of the beginning reader, while introducing this student to short, manageable chunks of writing, which are enjoyable to read. They conclude that:

> "ABE instructors and other literacy volunteers should not give in to the traditional belief ... that poetry is a particularly elevated literary genre, above and beyond the comprehension of ABE students." (p.308)

Writers such as Ruth Radin (*Sky Bridges and Other Poems*, etc., New Readers Press) have begun to produce books of original poetry for the adult new reader.

Another element missing from current literacy practice is the determination of individual reading interests. Heathington and Koskinen (1982) created an inventory with

three headings:

I would like to read about ...
I would like to read ...
I need to read ...

Specialists agree that choosing reading materials is part of becoming a good reader. As instructors, we regularly select print materials which interest us. Olmann (1993), states: "Real world readers do not wait for a teacher to tell them what to read. They read what interests them, what suits their purpose" (p.648). Literacy instructors need to give students more opportunities to select reading which interests them, in order to develop recreational reading as a lifelong habit.

Some methods and materials for adult readers

- **Methods for teaching adults**

Since most adult educators were trained as elementary or secondary teachers, they are inclined to view their students as "tall children" or "older kids." These instructors come into the literacy classroom with the same approaches they used in the public school classroom. They fail to notice that the adult student is not a big kid but an individual with personal, family, and work responsibilities. Michael Evans (1992) emphasizes the need for *adult* education for *adult* learners. He points out that:

> "As adults, these students benefit from an androgogical perspective that begins with an understanding of adult needs. In defining the term androgogy as the art and science of teaching, adults, Malcolm Knowles assumed that task was fundamentally different from traditional pedagogy, which literally means 'to lead a child'." (p.31)

Adult educators need to see themselves not as teachers, presenting information to be learned by the students, but as *partners*. Amy Rose (1994) describes a partnership in which adult educators participate as equals, helping learners to move and to change (p.6). Adult educators should be *guides*, who are there to meet individual goals, to introduce students to new dimensions, and to help adults become lifelong learners.

All teaching methods used with adults must be geared to preserving the dignity of the student. While children are routinely called upon to read out loud, adults should never be put on the spot in such a manner. Many adult students are extremely sensitive about their weaknesses. If their deficits are revealed to the group, they may be sufficiently embarrassed to avoid coming to class again. R. Baird Shuman (1989) writes in the *Journal of Reading* about the mistake of asking each student to read aloud in class. He encourages instructors to seek volunteers to read who are comfortable with participating in this manner. When the teacher and student are partners, the student is not ever put in a subordinate position.

Adults should be actively involved in their learning activities, and a lecture approach is generally discouraged. Many adults come to class at night after a full day of work. Placed in a lecture class, it is likely that some will tune out completely, while others may actually fall asleep. Active classes, with collaborative projects, engaging discussion, and hands-on activities are most likely to engage the weary adult. McAndrew (1993) encourages teachers to foster cooperative learning situations in which students help each other to grow under the instructor's guidance.

- **Schedules for adults**

Children are full-time students who have all day to learn, while adults are part-time students who have a multitude of time constraints. Therefore, class schedules must be varied, offering both day and night sessions. Educators who conscientiously plan for class should require commitment to consistent attendance. However, emergencies do arise, and educators must recognize that adults regularly deal with a myriad of variables. Understanding that the adult's work schedule and family commitments may change, Michael Evans (1992) encourages the instructor to be flexible: "We meet in the

evenings, four times a week. Some students attend all classes; some come whenever their schedule allows" (p.31). Alternatives sometimes need to be provided for independent study or tutor support for the student in a crisis situation.

- **Structuring the adult class**

Once the adult student is in class, the adult educator must be highly focused on maximizing every minute of instructional time! The class period must be highly structured to create a nonthreatening environment, in which it is safe for the student to take risks. Instructors need to get to know their students well so that they can gear instruction to individual needs and interests. In listing tested techniques for teaching adults, Peter Murk (1993) suggests:

- using questioning techniques of all types.
- providing a general overview of the material to be learned.
- allowing sufficient time for information to be processed.
- expecting that at least one new idea, concept, or perception will be learned by each student in every class period.
- setting clear purposes/goals before any listening, viewing, or reading.
- using warm-ups such as brainstorming, vocabulary pretests, and clarification of expectations before a learning activity.
- spacing out practices with the same material.
- giving both written and oral directions.
- encouraging self-talk rehearsals before engaging in an activity.
- using visual imaging techniques for remembering important concepts.
- using multisensory means for both processing and retrieving information.

He concludes that a variety of review and reflection strategies should be employed to bring closure to each session (Murk, 1993, p.26). After each activity, the adult should be assisted in evaluating the experience.

- **Using the adult's own words**

When many adult students first entered school, they were faced with a formal spoken English which was unlike their spoken language. It was extremely difficult for students who spoke a regional or cultural dialect to relate to the language used in class. Adult teachers need to model correct grammar and pronunciation, but they must also respect the environment in which the student is living. Victoria Purcell-Gates (1993) describes an Appalachian woman from a family of nonreaders who sought literacy instruction but had been hampered by her "hillbilly" language. The student herself reported: "That's why it was a little hard for me startin' to like ... sound my words out ... 'cause I talk different ... 'cause I'm, you know ... countrified" (p.211). All functionally illiterate adults are cultural beings, and in many cases, it is their culture and their spoken language which has prevented them from acquiring adequate reading and writing skills. A holistic literacy approach respects the student's language as part of her culture. It begins by validating the student's own language and teaching the individual to write and read words exactly as they are spoken, then moves gradually toward conventional writing and reading. Fingeret (1991) concurs that cultural and linguistic diversity must be celebrated, and incorporated into the learning experience.

- **Appropriate materials**

Adult literacy students did not learn to read well when they were exposed to traditional materials such as basal readers when they were children. Literacy programs which offer "adult" series involving standard stories and workbooks are doomed to failure. If this approach did not work for our students when they were younger, it is not likely to work for them as adults. Materials must capture each particular adult's interest and motivate this student to learn. The adult is in class because she *needs* to learn. It is the role of the instructor to bypass a traditional, sequential instruction and zero in on the

student's *immediate needs.* Amy Rose (1993) emphasizes that:

> "Many workplace literacy programs build on this approach. Using a literacy audit, they analyze work environments to ascertain the environmental context of the literacy requirements of a particular agency. They break down these needs into appropriate units and teach the required skill." (p.5)

This is indeed a start—an effort to give the student skills which are of immediate use. But, Rose cautions, it is only a start because although the new skills help the student to succeed in a particular occupation, they do not address clients' personal needs. If we are to offer true education, we must consider the whole person.

In all adult education classes, it is imperative to employ real-life materials which are appropriate for the age of the student. Writing in *Adult Learning*, Patrick McCabe (1992) emphasizes the importance of using relevant materials:

> "It is not appropriate to use material for children simply because it is easy to read. Some relevant reading materials include a driver's manual, religious material, cookbooks and housing rental agreements." (p.20)

Newspapers and magazines are timely and appropriate texts for the adult classroom.

Everything from the directions on the box of laundry detergent to the instructions on the label of an over-the-counter medication can be the basis for a language lesson. Allowing students to bring in their own "texts" is important. Lessons might revolve around reading notes from a child's school, following the directions for a craft project, or deciphering a bus schedule.

Evelyn Nunes (1991) presents a variety of models for evaluating publishers' instructional materials. She reports on the *13-Point Model* by Lilley and Perkins, the *Massachusetts Model*, which considers instructional content and technical characteristics, and the *Virginia Model*, which includes 15 criteria for educators and a four-point checklist for students. Nunes feels that choice of materials plays a crucial role in the success of an adult education program, and that there needs to be a more conscientious attempt to make evaluation of materials a planned, systematic, and ongoing part of an educational program (p.16-17).

- **Using computers with adult students**

Wangenberg, Thompson, and Levitov (1984) suggest using a computer to develop language experience lessons. The computer suggests a list of adult writing topics to the adult reader. After choosing a topic, the learner is encouraged to generate words and phrases directly on the keyboard. The adult student then continues to develop the writing and refines the text following prompts from the computer. The project described in this article also allowed the creation of a prototype adult basic education word list.

Conclusion

Although suggestions for adults-only methods are of infinite variety, the projects detailed here provide suggestions of the creative approaches a tutor or teacher may take in the development of methods and materials.■

SOURCEBOOK

CHAPTER 5

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE ADULT READER

A. INTRODUCTION

Fay Bowren (1987) in the *Journal of Reading* lamented that reading models for adults have not been sufficiently researched or developed using what is known about the way adults learn:

> "Although educators have long recognized that children are not just small adults, there is apparently more difficulty in dealing with the inverse conclusion that adults are not just merely tall children." (p.208)

Practitioners in adult education hailed the publishing of Malcolm Knowles' *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (1973) as a landmark. No educator has had as much effect on the field of adult education in recent memory as Knowles. Although the term *andragogy*, or a theoretical base specific to educating adults, had been used before, the relatively new, struggling field of adult education adopted it as a buzzword. Before Knowles, adult educators had used the general term *pedagogy* to describe the art of teaching to both adults and children. Now they had their own field of inquiry; their intuitive assumptions about the differences in adult learners vs. child learners now had a name. The theory was compelling.

In recent literature, criticism has been leveled at Knowles and other adult-learning theorists for the lack of empirical support for their assumptions. Since adult education theorists have tended to base their suppositions on a college-going population, there is some question as to how applicable all the theories are to adult basic and literacy education students.

Heterogeneity of the literacy population

Of more concern to us as literacy-education practitioners is the danger of assuming the homogeneity of the individuals we serve, for if there is one constant in literacy education it is this: *For each individual there is a unique pattern of goals, abilities, motivations and preferences.* No one assumption will be correct for all.

Along with the last statement comes the reality that the literacy population is even more heterogeneous than the andragogical theorists surmise. We need to be cognizant of *all* the principles of adult learning and to develop the wisdom to choose those principles that are the correct fit for the individual sitting in front of us.

B. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

According to later writing of Knowles (1980), adults who are self-directed learners both enjoy and benefit from maximum participation in the diagnosis of learning needs and in planning an individualized curriculum to meet those needs. The adult learner

views the teacher as the facilitator of learning, not as an authoritarian leader.

Several concepts contribute to this assumption. First, during the process of maturation it is normal to move toward independence from authority. What is viewed as the disaster of the teen years is really a necessary step toward adulthood. Adults have a strong need to be self-directing.

Second, adult learners are armed with a vast array of experiences on which to base decisions about the learning they need and want. Unlike children, adulthood has forced them to make hard choices, and they have learned that consequences follow both wrong and right choices.

Knowles also believes that adults often learn to solve specific life problems and have a specific agenda for learning commensurate with these problem tasks. For example, if a worker needs to read a computer screen to perform in the technological workplace, then the worker sets the logical agenda of learning to read whatever may appear on that screen. Knowles uses the terms *subject-centered learning* (pedagogy) and *performance-centered learning* (andragogy).

Brookfield (1986) cautions us that Knowles may have overestimated the adult learner's readiness for self-directing behavior, and that often the common reaction to a self-directing approach is one of resistance, confusion, anxiety, and often anger, especially among non-middle-class groups. He believes that adults pay a high price for education in money, time, or both, and that they expect the expert/instructor to already have determined the best curriculum.

Sharan Merriam (1987) asserts, along with Brookfield, that the concept of self-directed learning is improved if we view it as a goal of the curriculum and not an assumption about the adult learner. Knowles (1980), indeed, adds that, even though each adult has a strong need for self-directedness and the achievement of a self-directed learning environment, this is an advanced step in the evolutionary nature of adult learning.

Brookfield (1986) also comments that studies which support self-directed theories are based on research with middle-class, white, and highly educated subjects. Few researchers have chosen subjects of working-class backgrounds, and no researcher has yet conducted studies using other cultural or minority groups.

It is also important to remember that in "true" self-directed learning the learner chooses the preferred method, and that method may be, and is likely to be, that of a pedagogical model: the teacher will teach, and the learner will absorb.

> Brookfield (1986) makes an essential point: "At its heart is the nature of autonomy. Hence, self-directed learning is predicated upon the adults' awareness of their separateness, and their consciousness of personal power." (p.58).

C. ADULT EMPOWERMENT AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

The dominant population we meet each day in our literacy centers is disadvantaged—educationally, physically, mentally, and/or emotionally. They were the children in the lowest reading groups, separated from their peers in resource rooms, required to go to remedial-reading classes while the other students got to fool around in study halls. The students began to think of themselves as different from the norm and quickly learned to view themselves as incapable of learning since the teachers rarely required difficult assignments from their group (Coley and Hoffman, 1990). The students learned a sense of helplessness which translated into inaction and passivity.

Several studies provide the theoretical backdrop to learned helplessness, locus of control, and adult empowerment.

Rotter (1966) speculated that the degree to which individuals believe they have control over their environment is a strong psychological factor in the way they see the world and, consequently, learn. Rotter called this concept *locus of control*, and divided individual perception of control into two categories, internal and external. A person clas-

sified as internal perceives the outcomes of her behavior to be a consequence of her own actions. An external personality, in contrast, perceives that outcomes are more likely the result of fact, luck, or some outside force.

Weiner (1985) related the concept to achievement motivation. If an individual believes she has control of her environment, she is said to gain managerial control over her existence. This striving for managerial control is closely tied to how hard an adult tries to learn and how strong her need for self-directedness in learning will be.

The control an adult takes over the learning situation is critical to success. The much publicized (and criticized) Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) found that the perception of how much control a disadvantaged student felt she had over the environment was closely related to school achievement. The report states: "In different words, it appears that children from advantaged groups assume that the environment will respond if they are able enough to affect it; children from disadvantaged groups do not make this assumption, but assume that nothing they will do can affect the environment—it will give benefits or withhold them, but not as a consequence of their own action" (p.321).

As a result, students who exhibit non-control beliefs are unlikely to be active learners who take responsibility for their studies, unlikely to persevere in difficult tasks, and unlikely to take risks with new strategies which may assist their learning.

Coleman et al. state that minority students, except Asians, have far less conviction than whites that positive action can affect the success of the future. When minority students buck the trend, however, their achievement is higher than whites who lack that conviction (p.23). Puerto Rican students demonstrated the lowest control perceptions.

Another study with learning-disabled students (Borkowski et al., 1988) found that the attribution a student makes for learning is also closely tied to risk-taking and active learning. If a mature student is successful at a learning task, the student attributes this to hard work, ability, or perhaps luck. The learning-disabled students in this study felt that much of their success was attributed to luck. As a result, the students failed to develop successful learning strategies because they saw no pattern to their successes; they took fewer risks, and the guesses they made were often unrelated to the context. The authors found that the learning-disabled student views learning as unpredictable and, therefore, develops few strategies.

Winefield, Tiggeman and Smith (1987) studied locus of control with depressive adults. They found that as a whole, this group tended to react negatively even to success and to feel that any situation, negative or positive, is beyond their individual control. The researchers also see the characteristic of factor stability to be a perception of depressive adults. For example, although unemployment may be a transitory problem, especially with well-skilled adults, the depressive is likely to see unemployment as a permanent state unlikely to change, even if finding a job was no problem in the past. Antaki and Brewin (1982) see locus of control as an essential factor in the diagnosis of a variety of psychological disorders and behavioral problems.

Weiner theorizes the existence of another personality type in which individuals feel that an event is under their control, have the abilities necessary to make positive changes, but deliberately choose not to take positive action. This individual who chooses passivity chooses failure. The individual "knowingly, recklessly, or negligently" decides not to take action which would lead to a better outcome (Weiner, 1985, p.554). Weiner cites causes for this personality type: economic disadvantage leading to alienation, drug abuse, low self-esteem, and perhaps masochism.

Children who have experienced family break-up and trauma or children from single-parent homes are more likely to be classified as external personalities than those from

intact homes, attributing success to sources outside of their own competence (Gardner, 1975).

Many adult literacy programs focus on basic education skills and preparation for the GED exam. They provide excellent skills instruction but neglect to empower the student. In order to learn, the adult student must believe that he *can* learn, and that this learning *can* be used to change his life and to gain a sense of control over his environment.

A project in Montgomery County, Ohio, recognizes that women in their classes are unsure of themselves as "knowers" and do not see themselves as knowledgeable, so it provides opportunities for women to overcome past failures and use their new learning while validating their ideas. In an article entitled "ABE Women, Gaining a New Voice," Griffin, Sarcyk, Swarts, and Youngkin (1993) report that:

> "The Dayton Literacy Project stood apart from other classes because it encouraged the ABE women to move out of their silence and into new levels of understanding." (p.20)

Women are helped to formulate their own agendas for learning so that they can gain the strength needed to progress, and they are given support for giving birth to their own ideas. They are encouraged to learn again to speak, to overcome the frustration caused by years of voices telling them that they are inadequate as learners.

D. SELF-ESTEEM AND ADULT LITERACY

Eberle and Robinson in Thistlewaite (1983) describe the beliefs of adults who could not read. The researchers relate that literacy students share two common perceptions: that "anyone who has failed to become literate must be a dummy," and "if you can't read and write, you must be incompetent in other areas as well (p.16)." Negative messages from society and from significant others in their environment, plus the internal messages they communicate to themselves, become factors in perception of worth or value.

Indeed, research suggests that adults, more than children, are sensitive to potential failure because of negative educational experiences in their past and because of a fear that aging may have lessened their chances of success even more. Recent research asserts that self-concept and the style with which the adult either copes with these messages or resorts to defensive mechanisms determines whether these experiences lead to psychological growth or to continued low esteem.

Self-concept is a multifaceted construct which is often referred to in the literature but rarely defined in operational terms. Self-concept is variously referred to in the literature as *self-esteem*, *self-efficacy*, *self-attitude*, *self-regard*, and other related terms. In general terms, self-concept may be loosely described as feelings and attitudes about oneself, ranging from strong positive to strong negative feelings.

Positive self-concept is considered to be an essential part of mental health and forms the basis for an array of functional behaviors in adults. What is self-concept? In short, it is a pervasive, enduring opinion of one's self, or the value an individual places on self-worth.

Self-worth is significant in at least two domains of the adult profile: personal satisfaction and the ability to effectively function within one's world.

Components of self-concept

Self-concept entails two components, an affective component and an evaluative component. The affective component concerns the issue of acceptance or satisfaction with the current state of self-concept—in other words, how happy or depressed one is about his own self-concept. Self-efficacy, or the evaluative component, measures how competent an individual feels in being able to control his own life. Both components are salient to adult literacy programming since it could be theorized that a high level of acceptance would lead to decreased motivation to enroll and stay in a literacy program.

Conversely, dissatisfaction with self-concept (a high level of disequilibrium or need, in psychological terms) could lead to high motivation to change the current life situation. Acceptance of low literacy levels and acceptance of low self-esteem may be related to feelings of powerlessness and a lowering of expectations. The causes of acceptance are various: social expectations, opinions of significant others, familial style, perception of personal efficacy, educational history, and other causes.

Influences on self-esteem

There has been a significant amount of research to determine the causes of self-concept, positive and negative. In *Antecedents of Self-esteem* (1967), a leading study conducted in this area, Coopersmith explores key developmental factors: intelligence and competence, personal aspirations, childhood trauma, parental attitudes toward child rearing, social class, family work history, family stability, and parental factors. The following factors, according to the study, have some influence on the development of self-worth, both positive and negative.

Overall, development of self-esteem is closely related not to societal attitudes and status but to how the child is supported in close personal interactions. Therefore, social status, family income, parental occupation, and religious affiliation have little or no influence on the development of self-esteem. In contrast, more personal and immediate social factors such as the presence of the father in the home, a mother's satisfaction with working, and the individual's own work or unemployment are key issues.

To summarize the findings, children who are economically comfortable, who have stable lives in which the mother and/or father stay employed, who have parents who are self-reliant and satisfied with their jobs, and whose parents enjoy high levels of self-esteem themselves are likely to have the highest levels of self-esteem. In addition, when the parents are in a stable, nonconfrontational relationship with clear lines of authority, the children are likely to exhibit higher levels of self-esteem. Finally, high-self-esteem parents are likely to value achievement while low-self-esteem parents are likely to value the ability to be acceptable to others, in other words to get along with others even when it means a taking a subservient role.

When we look at the characteristics which individuals exhibit and the influence of these characteristics on self-esteem, research finds the following to be significant. While physical attractiveness seems to be unrelated to self-esteem, body strength in males is significantly related to high self-esteem. Intelligence and achievement in school somewhat contribute to self-esteem but are by no means very important.

In an emotional (affective) realm, adults with high self-esteem tend to have a richer emotional life and are more expressive about their emotions, whether positive or negative. In addition, persons with high self-esteem are generally low in levels of anxiety while low-self-esteem individuals feel greater amounts of anxiety, stress, and tension. Further, greater numbers of high-self-esteem individuals are classified by others as "happy" than low-self-esteem individuals.

Finally, as is borne out in many other studies, low self-esteem is positively related to psychopathology, or poor mental health, in the adult. Low-esteem individuals in this study were four times more likely to express some symptoms of psychopathology than individuals with high self-esteem. When mothers rated their children on destructive tendencies, low-self-esteem children seemed more likely to destroy toys, personal items, and inanimate objects. In contrast, physical aggression against an individual is not related to self-esteem. Physical violence is as likely to be perpetrated by high-self-esteem individuals as by low.

In terms of relationships with siblings and peers, it is fairly clear that high-self-esteem individuals are closer to their brothers and sisters, regardless of gender, than their low-self-esteem peers. This positive relationship

extends to close friends as well; the high-esteem individual is likely to be competent in social interaction in general. The individuals with the highest self-esteem overall are only children.

On a final note, the findings suggest that parents who are restrictive and who are more consistent in their enforcement of rules raise higher-self-esteem children; in other words, careful restrictions are interpreted by children as stability, consistency, and love, while fewer or the absence of restrictions may be interpreted as a lack of caring.

Research with literacy students

Hayes (1988) studied groups of low-literate adults and described each groups' primary barriers to participation. The group of individuals with the highest mean score on low self-esteem was characterized as being older, having the lowest level of educational attainment, and being comprised more of males than the total sample. She infers that the primary reason these individuals avoid basic education is a fear of failure perhaps linked to early educational difficulties, and maybe too as a result of the perception of being too old to learn. Rossman, Fisk, and Roehl (1984) also mention fear of loss of intellectual capacity as a possible deterrent to progress in ABE programs.

Studies have consistently proved a relationship between general school achievement and self-concept, and that poor self-concept contributes to lowered reading achievement (Wattenburg and Clifford, 1964). But the studies have not supported either the chicken or the egg; has poor educational achievement resulted in poor self-esteem, or has poor self-esteem contributed to poor academic achievement? Indeed, probably both factors are at work simultaneously.

Rossman, Fisk, and Roehl (1984) believe that individuals who drop out of continuing education, including literacy programs, were more confused in their self-image and were higher in their level of self-criticism. They assert that most participants in ABE programs are generally negative in self-concept because of the value society places on the ability to read and write. According to the authors, literacy educators must "help adult students make contact with their positive selves. Adults need to be aware of their values, feelings, beliefs, strengths, weaknesses and preferences." (p.39)

According to Boraks and Schumacher (1981) adults in literacy education have taken an assertive step toward self-improvement which may lead to a higher-than-expected self-esteem. Unfortunately, that first step is not without risk; if the adult is awed and disconcerted by the enormity of the learning task ahead, positive self-esteem may be momentarily reduced and the adult may drop out of literacy programs in an effort to "save himself"—or to preserve whatever self-esteem remains.

In *Self-esteem: Paradoxes and Innovations in Clinical Theory and Practice*, published by the American Psychological Association (Bednar, Wells, and Peterson, 1989), a theoretical model for increasing self-esteem in adolescents and adults is suggested. The model is based on the following assumptions: 1) that self-esteem is not a fixed attribute, but rather is "responsive to authentic, consistent feedback from either the social environment or self-evaluations" (p.117); 2) that the natural condition of life demands that we face conflict and recognize and accept our human imperfections; learning to face these threats to our self-esteem form the basis for powerful psychological learning; 3) that as self-esteem increases, the anxiety engendered by threat decreases; the converse is also true, a decrease in self-esteem increases the level of psychological threat.

Of greatest importance is the belief that the "act of coping with personal conflict requires risk taking, personal responsibility, and willingness to realistically face personal issues" (p.119). When the adult successfully confronts the issues, he is moved toward greater understanding of self and gains power

in the belief that he is able to successfully cope, no matter what the world throws at him. The more events in which the adult successfully copes with negative experiences, the greater strength is developed to cope with even more threatening events, and as a result, the greater the increase in positive self-esteem.

Confronting and dealing with negative threats increases the internal locus of control, or the belief in personal effectiveness, as opposed to a sense of helplessness in the face of adversity. The opposite, less desirable behavior in the face of adversity is denial, distortion, or self-deception as a means of avoiding the threat and the resultant fear and anxiety. The response style the individual chooses is key to either increasing self-esteem or staying mired in low self-esteem and negative self-evaluation.

E. LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN ADULTS

The term "learning disability" (LD) describes problems which individuals may have with learning and processing information. It refers to difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, writing, remembering, and reasoning or problem-solving. The most important impact of the disability is the discrepancy which is created between the individual's potential ability and her actual performance (Coleman, 1988).

Though literacy teachers and tutors express concerns about learning disabilities, most programs lack adequate diagnostic services and are frustrated by the lack of LD staff to work with students who need specialized teaching. It is unrealistic to suggest that literacy service providers should offer specific programs in special education. But the regular teacher/tutor can be made aware of a student's individual problems and be trained in the best methods of instruction to meet her needs.

Profile of the learning-disabled adult

It is difficult to characterize a typical LD student for she may have superior abilities in some areas of learning and severe difficulties in other areas. Many of our adult literacy students show excellent memory and listening skills while exhibiting serious problems with reading and writing.

However, there are a number of characteristics that are indicative of a learning disability. The LD adult may have a great deal of trouble with comprehension skills. She may read and reread a passage a number of times without understanding its content. She may guess frequently, substitute inappropriate words, add or delete letters or words, and/or transpose letters.

Some teachers and tutors report that many learning-disabled students cannot follow what they are reading. They lose their place on the page or within the paragraph. LD students may have trouble with grammar and sentence mechanics. They may have an extremely poor visual memory for spelling or an inability to sequence ideas.

While many students appear to have *some* of the difficulties described below, it is the *degree* to which they occur which will classify the student as being disabled.

1. LD adults are often **poorly organized,** both in their personal lives and in their approaches to learning. They have trouble being on time and are unable to adhere to schedules. It is difficult for them to identify priorities, and they find it impossible to arrange thoughts or items in the proper sequence. They may not grasp similarities between individual items, and they may be unable to link isolated ideas to form unifying concepts.

2. Memory difficulties may hinder learning-disabled adult literacy students. They may have a good short-term memory but a very poor long-term memory. Skills must be repeated constantly, and new information must be related to concepts which were previously learned.

3. Processing difficulties may also be evident in conjunction with the following visual difficulties:

- Sequential: the student copies *museum* as *musuem.*

- Perceptual: *b* is seen as *d*.
- Memory: spelling is poor, especially of nonphonetic words. These problems are evident when reading from the board or from the text.

4. LD adults may possess **auditory difficulties** which affect following directions and absorbing ideas from lectures and discussions. Some examples of problems are as follows:

- Sequencing: "1984" is heard as "1894."
- Auditory processing: "Bill of Rights" is heard as "pillow fights."
- Auditory memory: information is not retained long enough to write it down.

Also, LD students may have trouble taking notes merely because they cannot listen and write at the same time.

5. LD students may have **difficulty with perceptual motor tasks** which combine visual or auditory skills writing. They may exhibit:

- poor letter formation.
- poor special orientation.
- poor written expressive language.

Their copying and composition skills may be affected by perceptual motor difficulties, as well.

Profile of the adult Attention Deficit Disorder

A number of adult literacy students had Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) as children. Their symptoms persist into adulthood and they are now diagnosed as exhibiting Attention Deficit Disorder, Residual Type (ADD,RT).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM,III) lists the characteristics necessary for a diagnosis of ADD:

- **Inattention:** The individual fails to finish what he starts, does not seem to listen, is easily distracted, and has difficulty concentrating on schoolwork; as a child, he had difficulty sticking to a play activity.
- **Impulsiveness:** He acts before thinking, shifts excessively from one activity to another, has difficulty organizing work, needs a lot of supervision, and frequently calls out in class; as a child, he had difficulty awaiting turn in games or group situations.

After reviewing this profile, Wender (1987) notes that most ADD,RT adults exhibited symptoms of hyperactivity in childhood. They ran about or climbed on things excessively, had difficulty sitting still, fidgeted excessively, moved about excessively during sleep, and were generally "always on the go."

Some of the teachers interviewed for *How Adults Read* expressed concerns about dealing with students who continue to wander around the room, jiggle their feet, tap their pencils, and/or require frequent breaks from written work.

The ADD,RT student may have difficulty with self-control, always acting first and thinking second. He cannot tolerate frustration and is likely to act without considering consequences of his actions. He often interrupts while others are speaking (Wender, 1987).

Wender reports that this type of student may exhibit frequent mood swings. He may be very *reactive* ... becoming depressed much more readily and to a greater degree than other people. Like the child with ADD, the adult with ADD,RT cannot organize himself and is unable to stay on task long enough to complete an activity. His short temper may impair his relationships with other students and with the teacher. He may overreact to events and become very readily hassled or flustered. Such students are inclined to "make mountains out of molehills," becoming easily distressed and sometimes psychologically incapacitated. Wender states that these individuals tend to be bossy, strong willed, and stubborn. They are underachievers at work and have interpersonal difficulties. Wender concludes that they "... tend to be dissatisfied with their lives in general" (Wender, 1987, p.126).

In discussing attention deficits, Dr. Melvin Levine states, "The most common complication of attention deficits is chronic success deprivation" (Levine, 1987, p.122). Thus it

is imperative that the literacy teacher/tutor focus on developing instruction for the ADD,RT adult in which he can succeed.

Some adults with attention deficits are treated with the same stimulant medications which are prescribed for ADD children (Cylert, Ritalin, Dexedrine). Wender (1987) discusses the advantages which can be gained from drug therapy. However, it may be unrealistic to expect that the typical literacy student would be able to afford the cost of these medications or would be conscientious enough to adhere to the careful medical testing and monitoring that is necessary for effective drug therapy. Therefore, it is incumbent on the teacher to focus on educational intervention.

Literacy instruction for the LD adult student

Meyer and Keefe (1990) caution the teacher/tutor to be realistic about the goals for what they call a "Profile One Learner," based on the group types they identified. They suggest that up to ten percent of the total literacy population may fall into this category.

Upon entering the literacy program, the Profile One Learner may not be able to write or say the alphabet, and she may not know her age, address, or birthdate. She may have practically no sight vocabulary, and her instructional level may be below first grade. Her listening-capacity level may be below the second-grade level. Meyer and Keefe report that up to 70 percent of these learners may have problems with auditory discrimination; therefore, phonics instruction will be ineffective.

Although progress will most likely be limited for these individuals, they are entitled to a chance to learn. Expectations must remain realistic, and instruction should focus on basic functional literacy skills.

Meyer and Keefe (1990) outline the following teaching strategies for Profile One Learners:

1. Reading interview: to help find out what the learner can read and why he thinks people read.

2. Reading and beginning writing: sessions in listening, to develop the concept of what reading should sound like, how books are read, and what words are.

3. Language experience stories: as a meaning-making approach to reading; include dictating, writing, and cloze exercises.

4. Environmental print book: to prepare a book of words from the learner's immediate environment.

5. Word banks: to write new words on cards; later use in exercises for identification and sorting.

6. Sentence stems: subject and verb are read to the learner and she provides a word or phrase to complete the sentence; alternating stems may also be used.

7. Predictable stories: written with predictable patterns so that they are easy to read.

8. Guessing: using contextual and grapho-phonic cues.

9. Nonsense-word substitutions: to emphasize that reading is a meaningful process and words should make sense.

10. Sounding out: giving only initial letters of words in context to consider meaning before attempting to sound out the words.

Meyer and Keefe's strategies carefully detail exercises which are appropriate for the learning-disabled adult.

Conclusion

Many of our adult students are learning disabled in some way. Some of them attended school at a time when special-education classes were not available or in a place which did not have such services. Some of them were in transient families, moving from place to place too frequently to ever be properly evaluated or remediated.

Ideally, every literacy provider would have staff to properly test the learning-disabled student. Each program would have highly trained special-education teachers to provide instruction for individual needs.

Realistically, this is not possible, and is not cost-effective for typical literacy, ABE,

or GED programs. Therefore, programs should make every effort to identify the *strengths* of the learning-disabled student and to provide instruction using the methods in which she is most likely to succeed.

F. COGNITIVE STYLE AND ADULT READING

Differences in the way we perceive events has a profound impact on how we learn. Following, if literacy is viewed as an interactive model in which the skill of reading is closely associated with the affective perceptions of the reading act, then the reading strategies an adult employs are significantly affected by those perceptions. Researchers assert that each individual has a style of dealing with the world. A fair number of researchers believe that styles may be changeable and that our style changes to meet different stages of life. A few researchers believe that styles are basically unchangeable after the early years of life.

These characteristic modes affect more than just reading; they are pervasive features of the way we move through life.

It is important to think of these styles as separate from cognitive ability. If ability is the *how much* or *what* of information, then style is the *how* of information (Messick, 1976).

Most researchers agree that these styles develop slowly through experience and are closely tied to personality types. They are intertwined with affect, temperament, and motivation. According to Messick (1976), cognitive styles are not personality types, but rather they develop within the personality type congenial to the style.

The style is more pervasive than specific learning strategies one might use in a situation. Rather, they are "high-level heuristics that organize and control behavior" (Messick, 1976, p.6).

Although a multitude of styles appear in the literature, the following are the most commonly studied.

• **Field independence and field dependence.** One of the most widely studied in its relationship to reading and achievement has been the dichotomy between individuals who are *field dependent* and those who are *independent*. This concept focuses on the way individuals perceive the world, select information, and solve problems. It is the degree to which an individual is able to extract or "lift" discrete elements from a field of patterns (analytic) and the degree to which an individual perceives the world in holistic or "global" terms from which it is difficult to select discrete items.

Field-independent individuals are better at tasks requiring analysis and differentiation, whether the topic is understanding the punch line of a joke or critically analyzing a piece of literature. These individuals can remove items from the whole, analyze the items, and interpret the items as separate from the context from which they emerged.

As personalities, these individuals are not dependent on the group for self-concept. They tend to perceive items as discrete from the background when the background is organized, but in addition, field-independent individuals can also impose organization on a field that is lacking in organization so as to perceive it as organized. They can better recognize salient details in a passage or in oral input. Independents often enjoy individual achievement over group achievement and enjoy learning through discovery.

On the other hand, field-dependent individuals tend to identify with the characteristics of the group with which they associate and "are defined by their group." These individuals are more sensitive to social stimuli and have more accurate memory for others' faces and names. These individuals are also more susceptible to group influence. The analytical skills of this group are less developed (Witkin, 1977). The individual is unlikely to impose structure in a field where little exists, tending to assume a role as passive observer. They perform best when given clear and prescriptive directions in the performance of task.

There is considerable research on the relationship between field dependence and

reading achievement. In general, research supports the assumption that field-independent students are generally more successful readers than field-dependent. For example, Smith and Standal (1981) found that field-independent college students did better on general reading tasks than did their dependent counterparts and that independents tended to achieve in overall performance on factual and inferential reading tests of comprehension.

Field-independent students have better recall of facts, are faster in response to questions (Robinson and Bennick, 1978), and are better at categorization tasks (Davis and Cochrane, 1982).

In the area of risk-taking behavior, Christiansen et al. (1980) found that these dimensions influenced the subject's willingness to take risks and influenced the subject's decisions. In reading, independents were better able to recognize inconsistencies of text (Lefever and Ehri, 1975).

The ability to recall oral information was higher with field-independent subjects. It may be hypothesized that independents are more able to structure listening input and therefore recall the information more effectively (Frank, 1984).

Gluck (1972) observed better main-idea comprehension in young readers. Cohn (1968) noted better reorganization of passage ideas in field-independents.

Some researchers have hypothesized that younger and poorer readers are more affected by their cognitive-style preferences than more mature readers. Mature readers have, most likely, developed effective compensatory skills to cope with reading tasks.

• **Conceptual tempo.** The *tempo concept* describes an individual's stable preference in the speed of response and the degree to which alternative hypotheses are examined. Impulsive individuals tend to offer the first answer that occurs to them without benefit of reflection. Some signs of hyperactivity may be present.

Reflective individuals seem to evaluate differing answers and explanations, respond more slowly and, generally, more accurately. They are sensitive to the degree of uncertainty in guessing the correct answer. These individuals persevere at tasks and have a high standard for performance.

There is no significant difference in ability level between these two types, so the behavior is unrelated to general intellectual ability. However, in terms of reading achievement, the reflective group scores higher on vocabulary measures and has a higher mean reading level. Identification of main idea, recall of events, and detail recall were all related to this style (Davey, 1976). Greater word miscue rates are characteristic of the impulsive group.

• **Locus of control.** *Locus of control* is the cognitive style which reflects the degree of control the individual feels he has over his environment. Control perception can affect the way we approach a problem, the motivation to take some action in response, and the perception we have of the event after it is over. (See also p.106.)

G. LIFE CHANGES/LIFE CRISES

As noted earlier in this Sourcebook, Knowles (1980) believes that many adults are driven to be self-directing. They engage in learning because learning provides more information—more ammunition—in the struggle to get managerial control over their lives. While children learn content because they have to (subject-centered learning), adults seek learning to solve problems they are encountering in their daily lives in hopes that further education will solve some of those problems.

Cross (1981) states, "Adult learners are most frequently motivated by the pragmatic desire to use or apply the knowledge of skill ... They engage in learning to "take action—do something, produce something, or decide something" (p.84).

It was once thought that when an individual reached adulthood, little change took place, that basically, adults reached a plateau that would alter only as they moved into old age. Expected milestones mark the plateau:

graduation from school, marriage, birth of children, retirement. But according to Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), adulthood has periods of both stability and instability, and life-changing events (expected or unexpected) offer the greatest opportunity for personal growth. When a life-changing event occurs, the adult seeks to regain stability through adaptation to the new situation. Educational involvement is one of the instruments of adaptation the adult may choose. Knox in Darkenwald and Merriam describe the five phases of change:

1. **Prestructure:** before the event.
2. **Anticipation:** the period when one knows change will take place.
3. **Actual change event:** job changing, marriage, etc.
4. **Disorganization:** the period between the change event and the reestablishment of stability.
5. **Regained stability:** reflects reorganization.

The decision to reenter education is a purposeful one, based on the need to be comfortable again and in a stable state. Researchers Aslanian and Brickell (1980) assert that 83% of the adults in their survey could cite the specific life-changing event which precipitated enrollment in education.

Cross mentions another reason for participation in education: escape. For many adults, life can be a lonely existence with little opportunity for communication with other adults. Some basic-education participants enjoy the camaraderie of studying together in classes, of meeting weekly with a tutor, or of discussing education issues with other students. These adults escape loneliness and the daily routine of life. For others, the schedule of literacy classes may mean something to anticipate in the upcoming week.

H. LITERACY ACQUISITION AND SOCIETY

Several recent researchers and theorists have criticized literacy programs for decontextualizing literacy learning and for separating literacy from community (Fingeret, 1984; Kazemek, 1984; Freire, 1968; and others).

Paolo Freire is a Brazilian educator who proposed a system of empowerment for literacy efforts. In his major work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1978), he describes a literacy curriculum very unlike the curriculum followed by the majority of literacy programs. Freire sees the literacy teacher as a liberator who does not free others (literacy students) from the domination of illiteracy but rather is a "fighter" in communion with the students in her class. In a dialogue form, the student and the teacher practice "co-intentional learning" in which the teacher learns from the student what should be taught. Freire describes traditional literacy learning as a "banking system" whereby the teacher deposits information into the student who retrieves it when it is useful. The student does not use knowledge of his own because he does not possess it; he possesses only the teacher's knowledge. Freire also describes some literacy teaching practices as "narrative sickness." The teacher lectures on topics of interest only to herself and not to the student.

When Freire describes "code," he does not mean letters interpreted as sounds; rather, the code is the piece of learning that can be assimilated into the learner's reality. As that code is assimilated, the learner undergoes a change in attitude and is called to action. In this sense, literacy is not an end unto itself but a stage in the call to action.

Although much of Freire's work was undertaken in the slums of Brazil and other areas of South America and Africa, some of what he espouses is valuable in our day-to-day teaching:

- that the curriculum is ideal when it comes from the learner himself.
- that a literacy teacher or tutor should avoid playing the godlike "liberator" and instead put as much responsibility for learning in the hands of the learner as is possible.
- that critical thought cannot be stored in the learner, that it is a process which must be

undertaken by the self.

- that literacy is only a means to action; the action, then, is the object of all instruction; that changes in attitude and the willingness to make concrete changes in one's life are the true goals of literacy education.

Fingeret makes the distinction between individually-oriented programs and community-oriented programs.

Individually-oriented programs seek to instruct the individual toward the acquisition of those skills which will help him enter the mainstream of middle-class society. Instructional materials address housing, banking, employment, etc.: in short, those skills which would ensure entrance into the mainstream of American life. The content is already established by the norms of the community, not by the student himself.

Community-oriented programs are "more likely to be advocates of social change, facilitating efforts of individuals to address broad community concerns and teaching literacy skills as necessary to assist the larger process of change" (p.21). Empowerment, the preservation of the community culture, and "literacy" in the broadest sense of the word are all hallmarks of community-oriented programs.

Kazemek also makes the distinction between an individual's choice to improve status within his home community and an attempt to escape that community for a more middle-class orientation. The author sees the reading process as a part of community, not in a decontextualized setting with materials which mean little to the individual adult learner. He sees the role of the literacy teacher/tutor as nonjudgmental of the other community's values and, in fact, he views the teacher as an advocate, with the student, for change in the community in the role of social transformers.

Conclusion

A kindergarten teacher surveying the young faces in front of her the first day of class knows well that within her classroom exists a variety of skill levels even before reading practice begins. She knows that some children have read hundreds of books at home, others none. She knows that some children will count the cookies on their desks and will be ready to add two more, and that other children know the number but that the concept of adding may be foreign. But that kindergarten teacher is the envy of adult basic education teachers because the heterogeneity of backgrounds, experiences, or emotional involvement in reading is minimal compared to an adult basic education teacher's class.

It may well be the toughest job in education to give each different adult student the type of instruction she desperately needs, in an environment which supports her psychological growth and ensures that once and for all this adult will learn to read.

I. FAMILY LITERACY

Definition and goals

Family literacy programs are interventions which focus on breaking the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy by providing appropriate adult education for the parent and preschool education for the child. They also provide training in parenting and interaction with children, thus fostering positive attitudes toward learning together. Parents who once felt that only the trained teacher could help their children become empowered to involve themselves in the education of their children, and the home becomes a place in which education is valued (Darling, 1988). Stephen Reuys (1992) describes family literacy as an effort:

- to take a more holistic view of learning,
- to understand and build upon the broad family context for education, and
- to help both children and adults learn through activities that are mutually supportive (p.23).

It is an effort to provide literacy instruction which connects learning to real-life experience, while building bonds between parent and child.

Family literacy programs concurrently

address two goals of the *America 2000* statement of six performance goals for education which were developed in 1989.

> Goal #1: "All American children will start school ready to learn."
>
> Goal #5: "Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." (Oliva, 1992, p.192)

Impact of literacy

Success in reading activities is of paramount importance to all children. Elementary students are referred to programs in special education largely on the basis of reading failure, and many of them remain in special education for their entire school careers (Slavin, Karweit, and Wasik, 1992/93). They report that failure in the early grades virtually guarantees failure in later schooling, while child-centered and family-centered intervention with at-risk children can make a substantial and lasting difference in many cases (p.11-12). Family literacy programs provide parents with both the materials and the training to help them to stimulate their children.

Breaking the cycle of failure

Much attention has recently been paid to the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy: adults who lack basic skills provide educationally deprived homes for "at risk" children, who in turn fail to succeed in school. After reviewing the literature, Sharon Darling (1988) noted that teachers repeatedly made the point that student problems were exacerbated by lack of parental support. Teachers need parents to take part in school, to support its efforts, and to promote educational values at home. However, parents who are embarrassed by their own lack of literacy skills are often intimidated by the schools, and they are very reluctant to become involved in the educational process. Darling states:

> "Uneducated parents often have had no model for building a supportive environment for education, and their children cannot experience the success of their more advantaged counterparts." (p.2)

Studies have proven that intergenerational illiteracy is a long-term problem. High-school dropouts become young parents who are both educationally and emotionally incapable of guiding the development of their children. Many of these parents have such poor literacy skills that they are unable to obtain a job to support their children, thus the lack of financial support combines with the emotional stress to provide a significantly disadvantaged home environment, and "Deprived children ... perpetuate the cycle of poverty and of inadequate education" (Darling, 1988, p.3). It is clear that our educational system must be changed to place a priority on education and remediation for the parent, as well as for the child.

Even Start

The Even Start program is a Federal initiative developed in 1989 to facilitate the delivery of family literacy services. Its goal is to assist parents in becoming their children's first teachers while becoming more literate in the process. Furthermore, it serves to provide readiness experiences to prepare young children for entrance into the elementary school. Discussion in the *Federal Register* (March 23, 1989) states:

> "Even Start projects must focus on the parents and children as a unit, include activities on which parents and children can work together, and provide services in the home, if possible." (p.12139)

The purpose of this program is to work with the family as a unit, in lieu of providing separate and distinct projects.

Positive attitudes

In her longitudinal study of the impact of literacy, Anabel Newman (1985) found that role models, motivation, and interest had a significant effect on the achievement of readers who began as at-risk children. Family support is crucial to success, and positive

attitudes and encouragement to achieve can be extremely beneficial to the child. The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Program Model articulates a number of specific educational goals which are formulated to raise the educational level of the parent and to increase the developmental skills of preschool children, but they also include attitudinal objectives such as:

- Enable parents to become familiar with, and comfortable in, the school setting.
- Provide a role model for the child of parental interest in education.
- Improve the relationship of the parent and child through planned, structured interaction.
- Demonstrate to parents their power to influence their child's ability to learn.
- Increase the influence of literacy in the home so parents can help their children continue to learn when school is not in session.

By providing specific times for parent-child interaction, the Kenan Trust enables parents to develop a positive attitude toward learning and children to develop a commitment to lifelong learning.■

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF THE SOURCEBOOK

IT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THIS SOURCEBOOK to provide selected background material for the *How Adults Read* curriculum. It is not an exhaustive review of the literature, nor will all aspects of a topic be covered in these brief overviews. Its usefulness is its humble ability to provide further explanation and background information for the trainer who does not have the time to research the literature of every topic.

Clearly, however, this review of literature unique to adult reading does assert that teaching adults to read is a serious and difficult business. The material described here demonstrates that:

- An eclectic approach to literacy education provides the best assurance of success.
- Each adult is a unique individual who is best served in a program which is closely adapted to his needs and goals.
- The adult who is empowered to set his own agenda for learning is assured of growth in areas not only of reading but in personal development as well.
- The "teacher factor" is the single most important element in determining the ability to retain an adult in a program and to achieve reading success.
- The best instruction can be provided by the teacher who is knowledgeable in the areas of adult learning, reading methodology, and psychological and social factors which may have an impact on the adult student.■

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GLOSSARY

alternative assessment. Nontraditional measures of student progress in which assessment is correlated to student goals and curriculum. Such assessment should include a variety of procedures.

andragogy. Performance-centered learning, generally in reference to teaching adults (Knowles). (See also *pedagogy.*)

auditory modality. Use of listening to acquire new information. (See also *kinesthetic modality*, *tactile modality*, and *visual modality.*)

cloze procedure. A word-identification method in which a word is omitted that the reader must identify by deducing it from its context.

document literacy. Using information in bus schedules, maps, job applications, indexes, payroll accounts, etc. (Kirsch, 1989). (See also *prose literacy* and *quantitative literacy.*)

field-dependent. Description of individuals with less-developed analytical skills. They tend to be more susceptible to group influence, be unlikely to impose structure in a field where little exists, and assume a role as passive observer. They perform best when given clear and prescriptive directions in the performance of task.

field-independent. Description of individuals who perform better at tasks requiring analysis and differentiation; ability to remove items from the whole, analyze them, and interpret them as separate from the context from which they emerged.

frustration level. The point at which material is understood at below a 50% comprehension rate and the reader can recognize only approximately 90% or fewer of the words. The reading will be word for word with little integration of meaning. (See also *independent level* and *instructional level.*)

functional literacy. The ability to read manuals and newspapers, to use the information gained from these sources to secure employment.

independent level. The point at which material is understood at a 90% comprehension rate and the reader can recognize 99% of the words. The reader can understand the passage without assistance. (See also *frustration level* and *instructional level.*)

instructional level. The point at which material is understood at a 75% comprehension rate and the reader can recognize 95% of the words. The material is challenging but not so difficult as to lead to frustration. (See also *frustration level* and *independent level.)*

interactive model. Rumelhart's assertion that for skilled readers, all process models seem to occur simultaneously, allowing for a

variety of reading behaviors and strategies according to how difficult the material is, how proficient the reader, how much previous information is known about the subject, and a variety of other real-life factors.

interview. Initial intake and screening of students to assess needs and interests and set goals. Further interviews at regular intervals assess what goals have been met and what future strategies should include.

kinesthetic modality. Use of touch and body movement to acquire sensory information. (See also *auditory modality*, *tactile modality*, and *visual modality*.)

language experience approach. A method of involving the student in his own learning by transcribing the student's telling of something of personal interest, then helping the student read and analyze it.

linguistic approach. Approach to beginning reading instruction based on translating oral language into print using a controlled vocabulary based on the meaningfulness of language. Originated by Leonard Bloomfield in the 1940s.

literacy. The ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1986).

locus of control. The degree to which individuals believe they have control over their environment: a strong psychological factor in the way they see the world and, consequently, learn. A person classified as having an internal locus of control perceives the outcomes of behavior as a consequence of actions. An external personality perceives that outcomes are the result of some outside force (Rotter).

metacognition. Knowledge about and regulation of one's own cognition.

metalinguistics. Linguistic awareness: the knowledge and concepts a child or adult has developed about language and the way it is used in the reading and writing process.

miscue analysis. Interpretation of oral reading errors as "good" or "bad" according to whether mistaken words accurately reflect contextual meaning or not.

pedagogy. Subject-centered learning, generally in reference to teaching children (Knowles). (See also *andragogy*.)

phonics approach. Approach to beginning reading instruction which places a strong emphasis on decoding skills.

portfolio (or **writing folder**). Alternative strategy for measuring student progress in which the student maintains a file of dated sample notes, lists, drafts, revisions, final compositions, and journal entries. The teacher reviews the folder periodically with the student to assess progress and plan for current needs.

prose literacy. Tasks requiring use of knowledge and skills to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, poems, and the like (Kirsch, 1989). (See also *document literacy* and *quantitative literacy*.)

psycholinguistic approach. Approach to reading instruction that views reading as a communication process in which the reader attempts to guess the meaning of a passage using the fewest graphic cues necessary.

quantitative literacy. Tasks requiring the student to perform arithmetical operations either alone or with information presented in prose or document forms (Kirsch, 1989). (See also *document literacy* and *prose literacy*.)

reading file. Alternative strategy for measuring student progress in which the student keeps track of books read along with a sum-

mary of and reactions to each book.

schema. The conceptual framework underlying understanding.

self-knowledge. A personal vision of one's ability to complete a certain task; knowledge of one's strength or weakness; belief that when a task is completed correctly, success will be achieved. (See also *metacognition*, *self-monitoring*, and *task-knowledge*.)

self-monitoring. Awareness of how well one is completing the task and, with reading, knowing when one is not understanding and how important it is to stop and do something about it. (See also *metacognition*, *self-knowledge*, and *task-knowledge*.)

task-knowledge. The knowledge that the task demands; learners know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it; they correctly judge how difficult the task is and, if necessary, change strategies to meet the demands. (See also *self-knowledge* and *self-monitoring*.)

tempo concept. Description of an individual's speed of response and the degree to which alternative hypotheses are examined. Impulsive individuals tend to offer the first answer that occurs to them without benefit of reflection. Reflective individuals evaluate differing answers and explanations, then respond more slowly and, generally, more accurately.

visual modality. Use of vision in acquiring information. Other researchers have also included competence in the integration of these modalities as crucial to the learning process. (See also *auditory modality*, *kinesthetic modality*, and *tactile modality*.)

NOTES

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

New
Educational
Projects, Inc.
P.O. Box 182 ❑ Lancaster, PA 17608-0182

TRAINER'S GUIDE

HOW ADULTS READ

A Staff Development Curriculum

Judith A. Rance-Roney
Jane W. Ditmars

An Adult Education Act Section 353 Project
granted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to
New Educational Projects, Inc.
Tana Reiff, Editor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 A Quick Guide to using *How Adults Read* 3

2 About the Keys 4

3 Pre-Training Steps 6
Considerations for the program administrator

4 Needs Assessment* 7
A way to identify which Keys to use

5 The Inservice Program 9
Considerations for the trainer

Key Planner* 10

Inservice Program Announcement* 12

General Evaluation* 13

Session Evaluation* 14

Notes 15-16

* Reproducible for ongoing use in quantity

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How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum
Trainer's Guide
By Judith A. Rance-Roney and Jane W. Ditmars, 1990, 1994
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1

A QUICK GUIDE

to using *How Adults Read*

How Adults Read is a curriculum for use in staff development inservice programs. It is optimally used in a group setting, where the opportunity exists for discussion and professional interaction.

- The curriculum includes 20 "Keys," or quick overviews, of topics in adult reading. Each Key is arranged in the same basic format.
- The trainer is the most important element in the success of the inservice program. Although *How Adults Read* may be used independently, its effectiveness is greatly enhanced in a group setting under the leadership of a competent trainer.
- Each Key takes 45 minutes to an hour to cover, allowing for ample discussion time. Depending on your scheduling, two Keys may be covered in a single session. Two is the maximum number of Keys recommended for one session.
- The curriculum does not replace basic tutor training; rather, it is intended to supplement and expand tutor/teacher knowledge about the adult reading process.
- Virtually anyone can serve as the Trainer. Basic background information on the reading process and summaries of selected research are supplied in the Sourcebook section following the Keys.
- Each Key session should include:

  —**Introduction** to the topic, presented by the Trainer.

  —**Presentation** of the Key with the Trainer providing additional information from the Sourcebook section or from other articles or sources. These resources are cited in the "For More Information" section of each Key.

  —**Application** of the information by using the Teacher Voice, To Consider, and Your Voice sections of the Keys.

  —**Feedback/evaluation** loop to judge effectiveness of the Key presentation.

OVERVIEW OF *HOW ADULTS READ*

How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum addresses inservice needs of tutors and teachers of adult beginning readers, based on research in the field of adult literacy and reading in general.

The text is divided into two main sections: the Keys and the Sourcebook.

Each of the 20 Keys treats a major topic in adult literacy. The first eight Keys cover life crises/teachable moments, empowerment, motivation, functional literacy, psycholinguistics ("good-reader habits"), experiential background, error correction, and stages of reading. In light of this background, the next six Keys discuss teaching methodology: phonics vs. language-experience curricula, comprehension, perceptual modes, whole language, metacognition ("self-monitoring"), and self-esteem. These are followed by Keys on learning disabilities and methods for teaching adults. The last four Keys are on reading for enjoyment, teacher/tutor relationships, reader independence, and family literacy. You will observe some overlap and redundancy among the Keys. This is necessary so that Keys may be used in isolation.

The Sourcebook section describes relevant research supporting the Keys. A full bibliography of all cited sources follows.

2

ABOUT THE KEYS

to adult reading

HERE ARE BRIEF SUMMARIES OF THE 20 Keys to adult reading, as covered in *How Adults Read.*

KEY 1 • THE TEACHABLE MOMENT

The importance of capturing and sustaining a time of life change when an adult is most open to learning

KEY 2 • EMPOWERMENT

Why the adult learner's control over the learning situation is critical to success

KEY 3 • MOTIVATION

How beginning instruction at the student's level of success contributes to program retention

KEY 4 • FUNCTIONAL LITERACY

How to identify an adult's true literacy level through the use of meaningful activities

KEY 5 • GOOD-READER HABITS

How to help an adult student become less print-bound and more meaning oriented

KEY 6 • PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Why what the adult brings to the reading process can make a dramatic difference in learning progress

KEY 7 • PRACTICE, NOT PERFECTION

How good readers make "good errors"—and why it is counterproductive to expect perfection from early reading

KEY 8 • STAGES OF READING

How to recognize and gear instruction to a learner's developmental stage

KEY 9 • METHODOLOGY

How various methods of teaching reading can merge for greater effectiveness

KEY 10 • COMPREHENSION

How to encourage students to seek meaning instead of merely decode print

KEY 11 • PERCEPTUAL MODES

How to capitalize on a person's individual learning modalities and preferences in perceiving the reading task

KEY 12 • WHOLE LANGUAGE

How to integrate language skills to generate a greater emotional involvement with reading

KEY 13 • SELF-MONITORING

How and why readers who are aware of their strengths and weaknesses can employ strategies to increase understanding

KEY 14 • SELF-ESTEEM

A look at this complex issue and how it relates to learning success for the adult new reader

KEY 15 • LEARNING DISABILITIES

An overview of the main types and symptoms of obstacles to learning as seen in adult beginning readers

KEY 16 • ADULT APPROACHES

Recognizing the similarities and differences between child and adult new readers, and designing instruction accordingly

KEY 17 • PLEASURE READING

Ways to help learners extend literacy skills to high-interest applications in and out of the classroom

KEY 18 • TEACHER AND TUTOR

The relationship between the learner and an informed, aware, and flexible facilitator of learning

KEY 19 • INDEPENDENCE

Helping the learner adjust to the liberating yet life-altering feeling of newfound literacy

KEY 20 • FAMILY LITERACY

The critical importance of engaging the whole family in the literacy experience

FORMAT OF THE KEYS

Each Key includes:

- An introduction to the topic
- **Explanation**, providing detail on the Key concept
- **Implications for Teaching**, applying research to instructional practice
- **To Consider**, a section asking the inservice participant to think about issues presented in the Key
- **For More Information**, referring participants to other material in *How Adults Read* as well as additional resources. (For Pennsylvanians, copies of all cited articles are available through the state literacy resource centers.)
- **Student Voice**, one or more sidebars describing an anecdote of actual student experience relating to the Key concept. The authors interviewed adult students in literacy, ABE, and GED classes to obtain the examples; however, pseudonyms are substituted here.
- **Teacher Voice**, an anecdote relating a teacher or tutor experience illustrating the Key concept. These too were obtained from interviews with practicing teachers and tutors.
- **Your Voice**, in which inservice participants are presented with a hypothetical teaching situation. Teachers and tutors are encouraged to record their responses to the challenge. The trainer then leads a discussion of the various options shared by participants, to see how they can best apply the implications of the Key concepts to their individual teaching situations.

You may reproduce Keys—or any part of the Textbook/Sourcebook—as you need them, in any quantity, or provide the complete Textbook/Sourcebook to each participant. ■

3

PRE-TRAINING STEPS

Considerations for the program administrator

DETERMINING STAFF NEEDS

Polling staff on their interests and inservice needs may be more effective than merely presenting administrator-chosen inservice topics. Research suggests that when teachers choose how they would like to be inserviced, they are more likely to "buy into" the process and benefit more from the information presented.

A negotiated choice between administrator and staff may mean that the administrator chooses a list of topics he or she considers worthwhile for the staff but asks the staff to do the actual choosing of the topics by rating each topic according to their interests and needs.

You may plan a multiple-session inservice program using *How Adults Read* or, if time is limited, select only those Keys which would be most useful based on staff needs. If your staff needs more information in a particular area, choose the best Keys to address that need, as noted in the chart below. The Needs Assessment on the next page may be useful as well. You may then duplicate Key pages rather than issue books to everyone.

SELECTING THE TRAINER

Choosing the most appropriate trainer to conduct the inservice is a key issue. One avenue might be for the administrator or staff-development specialist to conduct the first inservices of the year, then solicit staff volunteers to take responsibility for the subsequent programs.

With the use of this curriculum, anyone can be an expert if enough time is allowed for preparation.■

THEMATIC ORGANIZATION OF KEYS

STAFF NEEDS:	POSSIBLE KEYS FOR USE:
Staff need more than phonics information.	5, 6, 9
Staff would like to understand the role of phonics.	5, 8, 11, 15
Staff would like to explore self-directed adult learning.	1, 3, 13, 19
Staff would like to include family literacy activities.	1, 17, 20
Staff would like to explore the use of writing in literacy.	4, 12, 13
Staff would like an introduction to learning disabilities.	5, 8, 14, 15
Staff would like reading to focus on meaning more than phonics.	5, 6, 8, 10, 13
Staff is struggling with retention issues.	1, 2, 3, 7, 18
Staff would like to utilize new methodology.	5, 9, 16, 17
Staff would like more information on the connection between the adult as a person and as a student.	1, 2, 14, 19

4

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Identify which Keys to emphasize in your inservice program

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE about to better serve your adult student(s)? Use this informal questionnaire to identify which *How Adults Read* Keys are of greatest interest. Each question number corresponds to a Key number.

☐ **1.** Frequently, some sort of life change motivates our adult students to come to our program. How can I take advantage of the "teachable moment" that this change offers?

☐ **2.** Some students seem afraid to try, to take any risk or initiative in learning to read, as if they have no power over their own learning. What can I do to help shift control of the situation from me to the student?

☐ **3.** I know that if things don't stay interesting, students will drop out of the program. How can I be sure I'm giving the right instruction at the right level in the right way to keep students attending?

☐ **4.** Just what is functional literacy? I'd like to learn more about how to meet students' real-life needs through the reading instruction.

☐ **5.** What actually makes a good reader? How can I help adult beginning readers use the same reading strategies that good readers use?

☐ **6.** I realize that an adult comes to a reading program with a lot more background knowledge than a child. What are some ways to use that background knowledge to boost adult students' reading?

☐ **7.** Is it necessary to require students to read every word perfectly? What kinds of mistakes might be all right, and how can I concentrate on a student's reading strengths instead of expecting perfection?

☐ **8.** How can I recognize what reading stage a student is in? When does a person step from the "learning to read" stage to the "reading to learn" stage?

☐ **9.** Some say the best way to teach reading is through phonics. Some say language experience, or whole language, is the best method. I'd like to learn more about the difference between the two methods and the best way to teach reading to a particular student.

☐ **10.** So many adult students get hung up on sounding out each letter of every word and miss the meaning of what is read. How can I help shift the focus from decoding to comprehension?

Continued

☐ 11. Certain students seem to learn better by seeing, some by hearing, some even by touching or moving. Are there ways to identify these differences and build on them?

☐ 12. I hear a lot about the "whole language" approach. What's it all about and can it work with my adult student?

☐ 13. In my own reading, when I come across a word I don't know or something I don't understand, I figure out a way to deal with it. How can adult new readers learn to recognize their own reading "glitches" and then solve them?

☐ 14. There is so much talk these days about self-esteem. I'd like an introduction to this topic to understand more about its relationship to learning to read.

☐ 15. My adult student is having a problem learning to read. Might there be a learning disability here? If so, how can it be handled?

☐ 16. When it comes to learning to read, it's clear that adults are not children. I'd like to learn more about the differences between children and adults learning to read and how that applies in my instructional approach.

☐ 17. Reading for enjoyment is such an important part of my life. I'd like to discover ways to encourage this for my student.

☐ 18. I've noticed how important the relationship is between students and their instructors. I'd like to look more closely at this relationship and how it affects learning.

☐ 19. No one is ever going to be a good reader unless they become more independent. But that's a big step. How can I help students break that cycle of dependency and foster some real adult independence?

☐ 20. The literacy problem is just going to continue if our students who are parents don't show their kids the importance of reading. What can I do to help that along?

150

5

THE INSERVICE PROGRAM

Considerations for the trainer

THE TRAINER MAY CHOOSE TO FOLLOW these steps in preparing for the inservice.

Step 1: Determine which Keys are most valuable to your staff (see chart on previous page).

Step 2: Read the appropriate Sourcebook sections for the selected Keys and secure copies of supporting articles if needed.

Step 3: Read the Suggestions for Instruction section of this guide and modify the procedures to your own teaching style.

Step 4: Fill out the Key Pacing Chart to act as a guide as you teach.

Step 5: Study the Key and take notes on supporting information.

Step 6: Rehearse if you need to.

SESSION FORMAT

Here is a suggested outline of instruction for the Keys:

1. Experiential preview. Begin each Key with a discussion of a common experience related to the Key concept which we, as adult educators, have shared.

2. Key introduction. Read the Key intro (first few paragraphs before Explanation subhead) to the group. Then bullet significant concepts on the blackboard with suggestions from the group. (These significant concept words will form the outline for the Key presentation.)

3. Student Voice. Allow one or two minutes for silent reading of the Student Voice. Choose a member of the group to take the part of the student by first reading what the student has said (the information in quotes) and elaborate by continuing with a few more lines of dialogue.

4. Explanation. First, introduce any Key terms that may be unfamiliar to the group. Explain that the summary of information under the Explanation subhead is for their review at a later time or for the instructor to refer to for specific points, and is not to be read in its entirety at this time. Following the Key concepts you wrote on the board, present as much information as you choose from the narrative and/or from the relevant Sourcebook material that follows the Keys.

5. Summary of Explanation. After presenting the Explanation, ask a member of the group to summarize the Key information. For variety, you may: 1) ask each group member to explain the Key concepts to the person sitting next to him or her, 2) form a triad group and relate the key concept to triad members, or 3) take a minute to write a one-line summary of the Key issue on a piece of paper.

Continued

6. Implications for Teaching. First, ask the group to discuss in what ways this information may affect their teaching or the practices and procedures of their literacy programs. Then refer to the Implications for Teaching in the Key. As a group, decide which implications are most critical.

7. Teacher Voice, To Consider, and Your Voice. These may be covered in triad discussion groups or as a whole group. If working in triads, each group chooses a spokesperson to report the triad's consensus to the whole group. Have participants silently read the Teacher Voice section of the Key, then tell the person sitting next to them (or the group a whole) what strategies the teacher in the Teacher Voice used to address the problem at hand. The instructor may choose one or more questions from the To Consider section of the Key for whole-group discussion. (Depending on time, prediscussion may be initiated in triads, with the spokesperson reporting.) For the Your Voice section of the Key, the triad or whole group shares thoughts and ideas. If working in triads, the spokesperson takes notes on the discussion and briefly reports to the whole group.■

An outline worksheet for the trainer to use to map out a *How Adults Read* Key session

KEY PLANNER

for the trainer

KEY # _____ **TITLE:** _____

1. Experiential Preview	
2. Key Introduction • Significant concepts	
3. Student Voice (role-play)	
4. Explanation notes • Terms introduction	Terms:
• Text concepts	Concepts from Text:
• Supplemental information	Supplemental:
5. Explanation summary	
6. Implications for teaching • As written	
• Teacher-generated	

153

DATE:

To: _____

Please invite your instructional staff to attend

A FREE INSERVICE PROGRAM PRESENTING

HOW ADULTS READ

A Staff Development Curriculum

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

This 353 project has involved extensive research into the adult reading process. It has examined the methods and materials currently being used in adult literacy programs. From this research, a staff development curriculum has been designed which we would like to present to you.

We look forward to sharing this material and we hope you that you can join us for this workshop.

Kindly reply to: _____

Phone: _____

A reproducible form for participants to use to evaluate a complete *How Adults Read* inservice program

GENERAL EVALUATION

How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum

	VERY WELL	MODERATELY WELL	NOT WELL
1. **Relevance:** How well did these topics relate to your teaching situation?	_____	_____	_____
2. **Clarity:** How clearly was the material presented?	_____	_____	_____
3. **Depth:** How thoroughly were the topics covered?	_____	_____	_____
4. **Discussion:** How effectively was the discussion handled?	_____	_____	_____

5. What specific aspects of this program will be most useful to you in your teaching?

_____

_____

6. What other topics would you like to see included in this inservice?

_____

_____

7. How could this presentation be improved?

_____

_____

8. What is the best length of time for this presentation? _____

9. What other questions should be included on this form—and how would you answer them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

A reproducible form for participants to use to evaluate a single *How Adults Read* Key session

SESSION EVALUATION

How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum

EVALUATING
KEY # _____

	VERY WELL	MODERATELY WELL	NOT WELL
1. **Relevance:** How well did the topic(s) relate to your teaching situation?	_____	_____	_____
2. **Clarity:** How clearly was the material presented?	_____	_____	_____
3. **Depth:** How thoroughly was the topic covered?	_____	_____	_____
4. **Discussion:** How effectively was the discussion handled?	_____	_____	_____

5. How could this presentation be improved?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your input!

NOTES

New
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PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

SECOND WIND:
REPUBLISHING IMPORTANT STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO REACH MORE ADULT EDUCATORS

FINAL REPORT

An Adult Education Act, Section 353 Project
Fiscal Year 1993-94
Contract No. 99-4022, $23,598

New Educational Projects, Inc.
P.O. Box 182
Lancaster, PA 17608-0182
(717) 299-8912

Tana Reiff
Project Director

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT 3

INTRODUCTION 4

THE PROJECT 5
A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 5
B. PROCEDURE: REPRINT COMPONENT 5
C. PROCEDURE: HOW ADULTS READ COMPONENT 6
D. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 8

CONFERENCE SESSION EVALUATION ..... Attached

ABSTRACT

Title: Second Wind: Republishing Important Staff Development Projects to Reach More Adult Educators

Project No. 99-4022 **Funding:** $21,239
Project Director: Tana Reiff **Phone:** (717) 299-8912
Contact Person: Same
Agency Address:
New Educational Projects, Inc.
P.O. Box 182
Lancaster, PA 17608-0182

Purpose: To republish *How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum*, and to reprint between one and four projects republished under previous Second Wind project grants.

Procedures: Updated, modified, redesigned, and repackaged *How Adults Read*, with the authors, Judith Rance-Roney and Jane Ditmars. Provided 1,000 copies of Textbook/Sourcebook and 200 copies of Trainer's Guide to State Literacy Resource Centers for distribution. Also analyzed need for, produced new originals, and reprinted in proportional quantities the following earlier Second Wind projects: Changes: Coping Skills for Adults, PROUD Adult Readers, and Work Adjustment Workshop. These too were provided to the Resource Centers for distribution.

Summary of Findings: No findings as such. The main product, *How Adults Read*, contains the results of new literature search. All of this project's products demonstrate accomplishment of its goals.

Comments: Substantial unanticipated time was expended by both the Project Director and the two authors who consulted on the project.

Products:

New products:

1,000 copies: *How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum – Textbook and Sourcebook* (140pp)

200 copies: *How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum – Trainer's Guide* (16pp)

Reprinted products:

400 copies each of five titles (total 2,000): *Changes: Coping Skillls for Adults*

200 copies: *Learn Together*

450 copies each of four titles (total 1,800): *PROUD Adult Readers*

200 copies: *Work Adjustment Workshop*

Descriptors:

INTRODUCTION

Second Wind: Republishing Important Staff Development Projects to Reach More Adult Educators was a staff development project funded under Section 353 of the Adult Education Act. It consisted of two components: republishing an outstanding Section 353 project from 1990, *How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum*, and reprinting between one and four projects that had been developed under previous Second Wind republishing grants.

Toward those goals, the project accomplished the following objectives:

1. Redesigned and repackaged *How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum* by producing an entirely new graphic layout and consolidating four separate volumes into two, one for staff inservice participants and one for the inservice trainer/facilitator.
2. Employed the expertise of the original producers of *How Adults Read* in reviewing the entire repackaging effort.
3. Conducted a Train the Trainer Workshop for *How Adults Read* at Pennsylvania's Adult Education Midwinter Conference.
4. Formally and informally assessed the relative value of reprinting four existing products (*Changes: Coping Skills for Adults*, *The P.R.O.U.D. Adult Readers*, *Learn Together*, *and Work Adjustment Workshop*), supplies of which had been quickly depleted after wide free distribution through the State Literacy Resource Centers, and apportioned budgeted funds for reprinting based on the results of that assessment.
5. Reprinted the aforementioned projects in quantities relative to assessed needs.
6. Publicized the availability of the newly republished materials.

These activities were conducted between July 1, 1993, and June 30, 1994. Project Director was Tana Reiff. The authors of *How Adults Read*, who were closely involved in the project, were Judith A. Rance-Roney, Ed.D., Director of English as a Second Language and Director of the Tri-Valley Literacy Regional Staff Development Center at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and Jane W. Ditmars, M.Ed., Coordinator of the Tri-Valley Literacy Regional Staff Development Center at Lehigh University. Assistance with the reprint component of the project was Cheryl Harmon at the AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center in Harrisburg.

The audience for this report and the publication produced by this project would be adult literacy program administrators and staff who are involved in staff development.

Copies of this report as well as the project's publications are filed with the Pennsylvania State Literacy Resource Centers, Pennsylvania Department of Education. Copies of all the products are available to keep while the supply lasts. The addresses of the resource centers are as follows:

AdvancE
Pennsylvania Department of Education Resource Center
333 Market Street, 11th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
(717) 783-9192
1-800-992-2283 (in PA)

Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center
5347 William Flynn Highway (Route 8)
Gibsonia, PA 15044
1-800-446-5607, ext. 216 (in PA)

THE PROJECT

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary component of this project, repackaging *How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum*, was proposed because the original 1990 version of it was one of the most frequently requested materials from Pennsylvania's State Literacy Resource Centers but, because it was typewritten and in four separate volumes, it was unwieldy and less usable than it might be with a major redesign. The Resource Centers had already reprinted the project, yet the supply of available copies had reached a very low level and these third-generation copies were not ideally readable. Further, the original *How Adults Read* was a valuable source of information on adult reading since it represented a major search of the literature on that subject. Not only was generally considered a definitive literature review on adult reading, but it was the only product of its nature to be designed as a turnkey staff development curriculum; as such, it needed to be updated in order to remain current and viable.

The secondary component of this project, reprinting selected products of earlier Second Wind repackaging projects, was proposed because giveaway supplies of these materials through the State Literacy Resource Centers had been almost completely depleted while demand for them remained strong. These products are described as follows: *Changes: Coping Skills for Adults* is a set of five illustrated worktexts on common problems in adult students' lives. *The P.R.O.U.D. Adult Readers* are four collections of illustrated student writings with accompanying language activities. *Learn Together* is a boxed set of 75 photocopy masters of intergenerational literacy and numeracy activities. *Work Adjustment Workshop* is a personal employment adjustment instructional program for facilitators to use with adults who have special learning needs. After assessing the relative value of reprinting each project and calculating future need based on past distribution, the money budgeted in this Second Wind project for reprinting these materials was proportionally allocated. As it turned out, all four products were reprinted, in varying quantities.

B. PROCEDURE: REPRINT COMPONENT

The reprint component will be described here first since it was straightforward and a smaller effort than the *How Adults Read* component.

The Project Director visited the AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center at the Pennsylvania Department of Education in Harrisburg. Cheryl Harmon of AdvancE reviewed with her the figures of how many copies of each of the four titles in question had been distributed since their publication and how many copies remained in stock. Ms. Harmon offered subjective advice as to how useful it would be to reprint each title. She suggested ideal quantities, that is how many copies of each title she projected would be distributed in the next three years or so if they were available. She and the Project Director also discussed ways in which printing costs could be cut on each title, to enable more copies to be printed within the same budget limitations. These

included using lower-quality cover stock, packaging *Learn Together* in envelopes instead of custom flat boxes, using standard rather than custom color inks, using stitches instead of spiral binding for *Work Adjustment Workshop*, etc.

The Project Director also conferred with a printer's representative. Together, they tried a variety of what-if scenarios on the printer's computer to test the comparative costs of reprinting using papers and inks of various types. The printer's representative also suggested using high-speed copying for most of the pieces, rather than more expensive offset printing.

The Project Director then compiled all of this data and worked out quantities, paper stocks, inks, binding, and other variables, based on the input of both Ms. Harmon and the printer's representative.

Final quantities ordered for each product were as follows:

400 copies each of five titles (total 2,000): *Changes: Coping Skills for Adults*
200 copies: *Learn Together*
450 copies each of four titles (total 1,800): *PROUD Adult Readers*
200 copies: *Work Adjustment Workshop*

Also, new laser output was produced for each product before the reprinting was done. Since the earlier repackaging projects were completed, the contractor acquired a 600dpi laser printer. The Project Director felt it was critical to take advantage of this improved output resolution so she opened each existing computer file, made minor modifications as needed, and ran new output through the 600dpi printer.

As each reprint product was completed (at various times due to the revenue schedule), it was delivered to AdvancE.

The evaluation of the reprint component of this Second Wind project was the process of apportioning the printing budget among the four products. Any further evaluation was considered unnecessary because these earlier Second Wind projects were evaluated when they were first republished and because distribution from AdvancE to the field was heavy.

C. PROCEDURE: HOW ADULTS READ COMPONENT

The procedure for repackaging *How Adults Read* was much more involved than the reprint component. Initially, the Project Director secured computer disks containing the original text files from the authors, Judy Rance-Roney and Jane Ditmars. The plan was simply to edit these files, create a new page design, and import the edited text files into the new page layout. In fact, every step of the process became much more complex than originally anticipated.

First, the original text files had to be converted and "cleaned up" for the new product. This was a tedious and time-consuming process, though it was preferable to retyping the whole manuscript. Once this was completed, the Project Director edited all of the copy, combining the original Textbook, Sourcebook, and Workbook into one volume and pulling the original Trainer's Guide out of the original project's final report into its own volume. In addition, the Project Director produced a prototype page design to be used throughout both volumes of the finished product. Both the

edited text files and the prototype design were provided to the authors in advance of a face-to-face meeting.

At that meeting, held at Kutztown University in September, the Project Director and two authors first realized that *How Adults Read* should undergo many more content changes than had been planned. The authors did, however, approve the prototype design, although that too later underwent a number of modifications. A list of tasks for each person at the meeting was delineated, with deadlines for each step.

At one point during the project year, Judy Rance-Roney humorously (and accurately) compared the *How Adults Read* repackaging project to remodeling a home: you replace the floor and see that the walls need paint; you paint the walls and see that now the furniture looks dingy; when you're all done you practically have a new home. Indeed, although in its completed form *How Adults Read* appears quite similar to the original, it contains many more additions, updates, and other changes than ever anticipated. For example, the new Textbook, like the original, is set up in twenty "Keys" to adult reading; the new version contains two Keys that entirely replace two deleted ones. The authors spent an enormous amount of time researching new developments in adult literacy; as a result, *How Adults Read* contains a great many new references. And for the first time, the complete bibliography was published. It represents perhaps one of the most comprehensive bibliographies on adult literacy research available anywhere.

The reader of this report would be bored by every detail of the production process. Suffice it to say it was extensive. The Project Director incorporated each bit of new copy as the authors provided it. This necessitated numerous changes even after the first page layout on some of the Keys.

Jane Ditmars presented a "Mini Train the Trainer" workshop at Pennsylvania's Adult Education Mid-Winter Conference in Hershey in February. (Judy Rance-Roney was unable to attend due to the extremely snowy weather conditions at the time, but she provided thorough notes for the session.) The Project Director introduced the Second Wind project, including the rationale and general format of the repackaged *How Adults Read*. Ditmars then led the approximately 36 participants through the prototype Key #1. The session produced lively discussion and a great deal of interest in the finished product. The Project Director produced a handout for participants, which included the prototype Key #1, one sample Sourcebook page, and the entire Trainer's Guide as it stood at that point in the project. Indeed, attendance at the session was greater than anticipated (this in bad weather and scheduled as the last session on Wednesday evening) and there were not enough handouts to go around. From our point of view, the session was most valuable for the feedback it produced, which could be immediately applied during the development of the product. As a result, the Project Director changed several of the Key titles and text language to be more accessible to a relatively lay audience, and added a needs-assessment page to the Trainer's Guide to assist programs in identifying which Keys to cover if they could not afford enough inservice time to complete all twenty. A copy of the session evaluation results is attached. Average reactions were all above average, with several participants rating the session at the highest levels.

Following the conference, the *How Adults Read* component of this Second Wind project was far from complete. The authors still had a great deal of new information to locate, write, organize, and provide to the Project Director. The Project Director had to edit and incorporate all these changes and lay out the entire two books. Many delays occurred throughout this time, due to a variety of factors: the Project Director was involved in another very demanding 353 project, as well as a major writing project and other, smaller projects; the project was mired in financial requirements, including fiscal audits from two previous project years that consumed an inordinate amount of the Project Director's time; Rance-Roney was completing her doctoral dissertation and a number of other high-priority assignments at Lehigh University; etc. Mostly, we simply wished to do everything we could to make the finished product as good as possible, and this took time for three people to coordinate and produce.

In early June, five months later than scheduled, the final version of the product was ready for the authors' last review prior to printing. Finally, in mid-June, both the Textbook/Sourcebook and Trainer's Guide went to the printer. There, more delays occurred, as the printer preferred to output directly from disk (rather than from hard-copy originals). Together we had to resolve a series of system compatibility problems in order to do it that way. The final product was not actually delivered until August 3.

This series of delays, all in the name of quality, did, we feel, result in a far superior product than perhaps was proposed. The delays did not, however, allow enough time to externally evaluate the final product. A survey card was to have been enclosed in copies of the product, which was to have been distributed in March. The user survey was not done because by August, when the product was ready, it was too late to allow time for receiving responses. We regret the lack of formal external evaluation; however, we feel that the boundless dedication and involvement of the authors, the ongoing refinement of the content, and the emphasis on accuracy and quality by all three persons involved in this project serve as a de facto internal evaluation/quality-control effort, which was indeed part of the planned evaluation of this project.

The availability of the product was publicized through letters covering sample copies to directors of the nine Regional Literacy Staff Development Centers in Pennsylvania and through a press release to *What's the Buzz?*, Pennsylvania's adult basic and literacy education newsletter. We expect additional dissemination publicity through Pennsylvania's two State Literacy Resource Centers. In addition, we expect *How Adults Read* to be submitted to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, through which national dissemination will take place via microfiche copies of the product.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the nature of this project was publication of materials which had already been published and evaluated, and because of the late release of the new *How Adults Read*, no conclusions have been drawn regarding their content or value.

The only conclusion that might be indicated here would be that a publishing project such as the repackaging of *How Adults Read* is a major effort if a quality product

is the expected outcome. The budget for this project was inadequate for the time expended, though through a dedicated, cooperative effort we feel we have produced a quality product.

The recommendation, then, would be for publishing and republishing projects to be adequately funded so that products will be usable and accessible. Doing this will require the contractor to first request an adequate budget and then for the funding agency to grant the requested money.

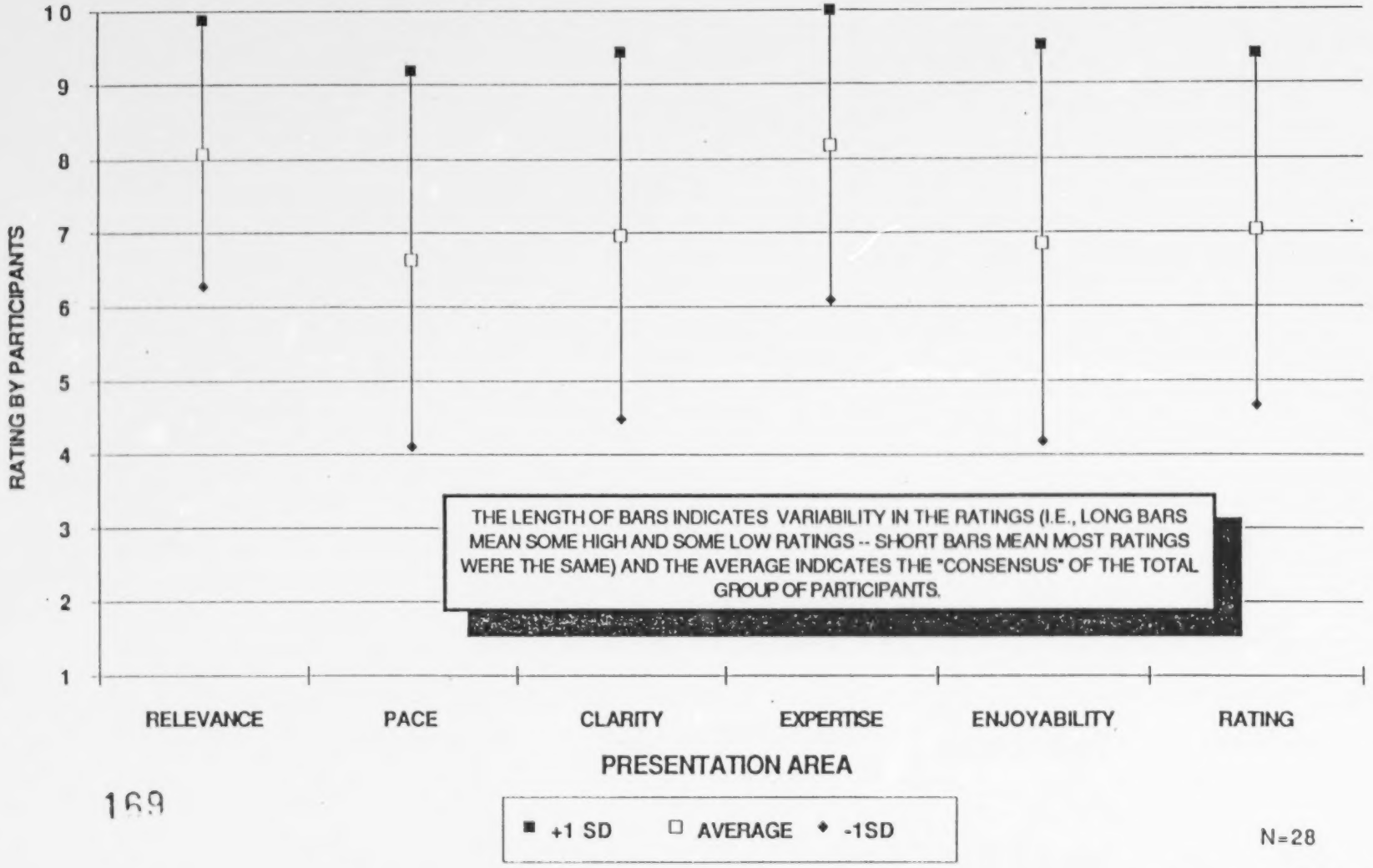
Even better, materials of the caliber of *How Adults Read* should be published commercially. Currently, the procedure for commercially publishing materials produced under Section 353 grants is so complicated as to render this option effectively impossible.

Further, we believe it was appropriate to have provided a substantial number of copies of the final products so that free copies can be disseminated to practitioners in the field. We feel that our products are used more extensively because they are not just loan copies.

One copy each of *How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum - Textbook and Sourcebook* and *How Adults Read: A Staff Development Curriculum - Trainer's Guide* are attached to this report. Copies of the materials produced by the reprinting component of this project are not attached but have been supplied to and are available from Pennsylvania's State Literacy Resource Centers. Those contact addresses are listed on page three of this report.

Questions regarding the contents of *How Adults Read* should be directed to Judith Rance-Roney and Jane Ditmars, whose addresses are listed in the Textbook/ Sourcebook. Questions and comments regarding the production of the materials described here should be directed to Tana Reiff, Project Director, through New Educational Projects, Inc. ■

SESSION 10: HOW ADULTS READ: TRAIN THE TRAINER WORKSHOP



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